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OF THE

COURTS

OF

BERLIN, DRESDEN, WARSAW,
AND VIENNA,

IN THE YEARS 1777, 1778, AND 1779.

By N. WILLIAM WRAXALL, Esq.

IN TWO VOLUMES:

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LETTER XVIII.

Journey from Cracow to Warsaw.—Appearance of that capital.—Want of police and regulations.—The Vistula.—Praga.—Signs of decay and ruin.—Jews.—Reflections on the state of Poland.

WARSAW, June 28th, 1778.

NO tract of country in Europe can offer fewer objects of information, curiosity, or amusement, in the common acceptation of the terms, than that which extends from the gates of Cracow to the suburbs of Warsaw; a distance of at least two hundred miles through the central provinces of Poland. It may however be justly said, that the appearance of the

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country

country itself, the aspect of its inhabitants, and the face of every individual, excite reflexions, which, if not pleasing, are nevertheless important and instructive. In the midst of a soil naturally rich and fertile, they are in want of common necessaries. I could scarcely procure bread in any of the wretched posthouses at which I stopped, except of a kind so black, sour, and execrable, as not to be eaten. Inns there are none which merit the name : but the Jews, who form the majority of the people in the villages, seem to keep alive the little subsisting industry. The Poles, among whom depopulation, oppression, and misery, appear under every possible shape, manifest in their looks and their whole appearance, the utmost poverty : even the churches are composed of wood, and the hovels of the peasants are made of the same materials. I scarcely saw a nobleman's or gentleman's house of any kind ; and the roads are either left in their natural state, or are made, where the ground is marshy, by fir trees laid across them close to each other,

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as in many parts of Russia. The very water is mostly unwholesome and stagnant. It must however be admitted that the posts are tolerably well served; and though the horses are small and weak, yet as numbers supply the defect of strength, a traveller cannot reasonably complain of the want of expedition. As I drew near Warsaw, I saw no marks of opulence, cultivation, or luxury, such as usually bespeak the approach to a capital. A wide, open plain, interspersed with little woods of fir or birch, and equally destitute of natural, as of artificial beauty, extends quite to the entrance of the city.

This metropolis itself seems to me, like the Republic of which it is the nominal head, to unite the extremes of civilization and of barbarism, of magnificence and wretchedness, of splendor and misery; but, unlike all other great cities of Europe, these extremes are not softened, approximated, and blended by any intermediate gradations. The middle orders of men, who every where else form the most numerous class

of citizens, the most useful, and the most industrious, appear hardly to have any existence here. Palaces and sheds, the mansions of the great, and the cottages of the poor, compose exclusively the larger portion of Warsaw. It is like an assemblage of nobles and slaves, of lords and vassals, such as the darkness of the middle ages, when feudal tyranny prevailed universally, might have exhibited ; but which, happily for mankind, is now no where to be seen except in Poland. Even Constantinople is in this respect far less barbarous ; and the genius of the Ottoman government, little calculated as it is to promote the felicity of the people, nevertheless seems more favourable to commerce, ingenuity, and the arts that humanize society, than the city from which I am now writing. The despotism of one man, however degrading or pernicious, is yet less destructive than the tyranny of a thousand petty despots ; and the Turks, though fallen from their antient splendor, do not present a picture of national degradation or humili-

ation, such as the Poles at present offer to the world.

As I walk through the streets of Warsaw, and survey the buildings around me, I am tempted to imagine myself in some scattered and half-ruined village. All the municipal defects of Cracow exist here in a greater degree. I am no longer surprized that a King seated in his own carriage, surrounded by guards and attendants, could be seized and carried off in the midst of his capital, as happened to Stanislaus scarcely seven years ago. In a city where no lamps are lighted even in winter, and no precautions are taken for general security, any desperate banditti, protected by the night, may commit the most atrocious crimes. I am not amazed to hear Mr. Wroughton, the English Minister, say, that he has seen Prince Radzivil, one of the greatest Polish noblemen, when coming to court in his own coach drawn by the finest set of horses in the kingdom, so completely stuck fast in the mire at a hundred yards from the Royal Palace, as to make it

necessary for him to be taken out, and carried thither in the arms of his servants. At the close of the late reign, when Augustus the third died, no longer ago than 1763, Warsaw was almost wholly unpaved. Even at present, in this beautiful season of the year, after violent or sudden rains, many of the streets are rendered totally impassable on foot, and nearly so on horseback, or in a carriage. The buildings are so irregular, scattered, and disjoined, that great spaces remain unoccupied, and even unlevelled, in the most frequented parts of the metropolis. In front of Stanislaus's palace, so indecently neglected are the sewers, that the smell is pestilential. A nation too indolent to remedy such nuisances, or so accustomed to them as not to perceive how incompatible they are with safety, comfort, and salubrity, seems not far removed from barbarism: yet, by a singular contradiction, Warsaw presents under other aspects all the refinement of Paris, the arts of Florence, and the splendor of Peterburgh,

The Vistula, though considerably broader than the Thames at Windsor, wants beauty, depth, and every artificial aid or improvement. Its sides are in general low and sandy; its channel is obstructed by banks which continually shift; and the colour of its waters is thick and muddy, like those of the Tyber. The Poles seem scarcely to be conscious that it is navigable; and it is rare to see upon it a vessel of any kind. A bridge of boats, laid across the stream, conducts to Praga, a town or suburb on the eastern side. Praga is a wretched collection of cottages or huts, built of wood, and scattered irregularly in the sand without order or plan; such as Tartars, and only Tartars would construct or inhabit. Yet this is the principal object seen from the windows of the royal palace, which stands on the opposite bank. It is large, but cannot be esteemed a regular, or a magnificent edifice. The two last kings, Augustus the Second and Third, not chusing to inhabit it, erected another, in which, when at Warsaw they

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commonly

commonly resided and held their court, still denominated from them, "the Saxon Palace." Hardly a single public monument of art, taste, or devotion, exists in this metropolis. The very churches and palaces are unfinished, or falling to decay. Among the latter are many which want inhabitants; not more than a fourth part of the great families who resided here at the death of Augustus the Third, being now in a state to maintain their dignity. Prince Radzivil's palace, one of the most superb, is converted into a playhouse. Such is the wretched state of the capital of Poland; a country which previous to the late dismemberment, was larger than the nine Circles of the German Empire.

The people accord in their appearance too well with the aspect of every thing around them. I never beheld so many objects of horror or compassion, as present themselves in the streets: many of these are a disgrace to humanity, as well as a reproach to the national police. Warsaw is
likewise

likewise crowded with Jews, who form a considerable proportion of the inhabitants. They wear a distinguishing dress, and derive a very precarious subsistence from the arts of fraudulent commerce, most of them being extremely poor. From time to time they are plundered, exiled, imprisoned, and massacred : yet, under such accumulated vexations, they continually multiply, and are here found in far greater numbers than even at Amsterdam.

After this disgusting description of Warsaw, you will be astonished when I add, that notwithstanding the picture of public misery which it displays, it is difficult not to be pleased with it as a temporary residence. Many circumstances conduce to render the place more than ordinarily agreeable to a stranger. The King is, of all the Princes whom I have ever seen, the most accessible, easy, and even captivating in his manners. I have been in his society ; and one cannot be surprised, on considering his person and address, at the partiality of Catharine for
Count

Count Poniatowski. The Polish and Lithuanian nobility of both sexes, whatever may be their essential defects of character, want none of the exterior graces of deportment. In the palaces of the Oginskis, the Czartoriskis, the Lubomirskis, and numerous others, is still to be found every display of refinement, hospitality, and magnificence. Many of the great families continue to live in a style almost royal, amidst the ruins of their agonizing and expiring country. In no court or capital of Europe are to be found men more accomplished, nor women more beautiful, polished, and agreeable. As an Englishman, I have the greatest personal obligations to Mr. Wroughton, his Majesty's Minister, who has rendered my stay here at once delightful and informing. His long residence in Poland; his intimate acquaintance, or rather friendship with the King, both before and since his elevation to the throne; his perfect knowledge of this country, whose convulsions, decline, and partition he has witnessed; the variety of curious
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and interesting anecdotes with which his conversation abounds ; these circumstances, added to numerous proofs of his regard, have in some measure blinded, or reconciled me to the wretchedness which I perceive on all sides.

I contemplate this country as the most instructive and awful of political lessons : I even esteem myself fortunate in being able to survey it, before Poland sinks and is erased from the list of nations, or is incorporated with the great surrounding monarchies ; an event which, according to every appearance, cannot be very distant ; and which is, indeed, now rather to be wished than deprecated, even by the Poles themselves. I have been enabled to ascertain, from some of the highest sources of information, the principal *external* causes which led to the partition of Poland : for, in the detestable and ruinous form of their constitution, must be sought the *internal* source of all their national calamities. What else, in fact, could rationally be expected

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as the natural death of a country, where the crown is at once elective, venal, and powerless; where the nobility are independent, uncontrollable, and tyrannical; while the people are sunk in slavery, ignorance, oppression, and poverty! We should rather wonder, that in the present progressive state of Europe, Poland has lasted thus long, instead of being surprised at its ruin and approaching extinction. In my next letter I mean to endeavour to delineate the immediate causes of that great event, the partition; as well as to consider its effects, present and future. If it be not a pleasing, it must at least be admitted to form as momentous a subject of investigation and reflexion, as ever was presented to the human mind.

LETTER XIX.

Examination of the causes of the decline of Poland.—State of that country at the time of John Sobieski's death.—Change in the position of Europe at the decease of Augustus the Third.—Consequences of the death of the Empress Elizabeth of Russia.—Origin of the plan for the partition of Poland.—Developement and progress of that great event.—Interview of Neustadt in Moravia.—Accomplishment of the partition.—Its comparative advantages to Russia, Austria, and Prussia.—Probable destiny of Poland.—Internal and moral causes of its destruction.—Picture of the Nobility.—Middle orders.—Peasants.

WARSAW, July 3d, 1778.

WHOEVER considers the state of Poland, and reflects on the nature of its government, will perceive, that while the surrounding Powers of the continent have been in a constant state of improvement or progression

gression civil and military, for near a century past, the Poles alone have been stationary. At the death of John Sobieski, hardly more than eighty years ago, the Swedes and the Turks were the only formidable enemies of the Republic. Russia, under Peter the Great, was only just emerging from barbarism, and scarcely become a member of the European system. The House of Brandenburg inspired little apprehension, and had not then attained beyond the electoral dignity. As Dukes of Prussia, they had for ages been feudatories of Poland; while Austria, pressed on one side by the Porte, and on the other by the arms of Louis the Fourteenth, could scarcely resist the attacks of two such powerful antagonists. To the personal assistance and valor of Sobieski, at the head of a Polish army; the Emperor Leopold had been recently indebted for his preservation, when driven from his capital by the Ottoman forces. The immense standing armies of modern times were then comparatively unknown; and Poland, under all the

the defects of its government political and civil, might still repel invasion, or maintain its independence.

But in the interval of near seventy years, which elapsed between the decease of John Sobieski and that of the late King Augustus the Third, the face of Europe had totally changed. The Swedes, after repeatedly over-running and subjugating Poland ; driven back by the Czar Peter, beyond the Baltic, no longer maintained any political relations, except those merely of amity, with the Polish Crown and Republic : while the Turkish Empire, declining annually in strength, could neither extend to them effectual aid, nor inflict on them material injury. Other powers had arisen to supply the place of Sweden and Turkey. In October 1763, when the Saxon Line of Polish Sovereigns became extinct, Russia, by the permanent conquest of Livonia, by her influence in Courland, and by her prodigious military force, might be said to have acquired a domineering and almost irresistible ascendancy

ancy in the affairs of Poland. Thirty years earlier, in 1733, at the death of Augustus the Second, the Empress Anne had been able to raise that Prince's son to the throne, and to maintain him in it against all the efforts of France, aided by a party among the Poles themselves. Elizabeth, her successor, followed the same line of policy. Prussia, after a war of seven years, sustained under circumstances of unparalleled inequality, had by a sort of miracle extricated herself, and was likewise become a Power of the first consideration. The talents of Frederic, his victories, and his ambition, rendered the Prussian monarchy peculiarly an object of attention, if not of terror. Lastly, Maria Theresa, though foiled in her attempt to recover Silesia, possessed nevertheless immense resources; and might, from her position, have a great influence on the destiny of Poland, either as an ally, or as an enemy.

At the time when the throne became vacant by the decease of Augustus the Third, the three great Powers above mentioned

tioned retained under their command a regular, disciplined, military force, amounting together to above four hundred and fifty thousand men. On the contrary, the Polish army, if it could properly be so termed, consisted rather in the prerogative with which the constitution vested the King, of calling out and arming the Nobility, if emergency required, than in any effective body of soldiery, paid, clothed, and maintained by the state. It is indeed palpable that if Russia, Austria, and Prussia, had chosen to dismember and divide Poland in 1763, as they did nine years later in 1772, no internal or effectual opposition could have been made by the Republic, which would have finally prevented the partition of its territories among those powers. The intractability, want of foresight, and insatiation of the Polish Grandees, who would see no object of jealousy except their own Sovereign, and who would take no precaution against external attack, left them at the mercy of any foreign combination.

While the Saxon Kings continued to reign, these evils were nevertheless retarded and averted. They maintained themselves on the venal throne which they had originally purchased, by foreign alliances of marriage, consanguinity, and policy. If Elizabeth, Empress of Russia, had survived Augustus the Third, there is no doubt that the destiny of the north of Europe would have been totally changed. The Saxon Princes would probably still have governed Poland; and that country would have retained its ancient limits: while on the contrary Prussia would have inevitably been, if not dismembered and divided, at least considerably reduced in territory, revenue, and political importance. Elizabeth had given public proofs of her resolution to support Augustus and his descendants on the throne of Poland. She had even raised one of his younger sons, Prince Charles of Saxony, to the Dukedom of Courland, as an earnest of her future exertions in favour of his House. But the late King of Poland

had

had the misfortune to outlive his ally and benefactress just one and twenty months. Elizabeth expired in January 1762; and her death was the era from which we may date the destruction of Poland as an European State. The reign of Peter, short and tragical, was succeeded by that of Catharine. It was evident, from the age and infirmities of Augustus the Third, that the Polish crown must soon become vacant. If his son, the Electoral Prince, should be chosen in his room, the Saxon Family could no longer be considered as elective, but in effect as hereditary; and all attempts to make a partition of Poland would be ineffectual. The Peace of Hubertsburg, recently concluded, left his Prussian Majesty at liberty to turn his principal views and efforts towards Warsaw. He well knew that the time was critical, and that every thing depended on the choice of a successor after Augustus's decease.

Such were the circumstances in which was conceived the project of the partition

of Poland. I will relate from high and concurring testimonies, what I have collected relative to it, at Petersburg, Vienna, Berlin, and finally during my stay in this capital.

The plan unquestionably originated in the Cabinet of Prussia; but not with the King, nor with any of his ministers. His brother Prince Henry's deep and capacious mind is said to have first seized, digested, and ripened the plan in silence. When he communicated his ideas on the subject to Frederic, that Monarch, while he expressed his admiration of it in theory, considered it as impracticable, and as opposed by too many obstacles ever to be realized. Prince Henry on the other hand contended, that by the aid of time, judicious concealment, and dexterous management, the partition might be finally effected. He brought over the King to his opinion; and they began in concert the train of measures requisite for its completion. The first step taken, was artfully to flatter the new Empress of Russia,

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to awaken her vanity, and to represent to her the honour, as well as the advantage, of giving a Sovereign to Poland, after having placed herself on the throne of the Czars. Catharine listened with complacency to suggestions so well calculated to make impression on a mind like hers, anxious for every species of glory. Impelled by her partiality for Count Poniatowski, and probably likewise induced by her perfect knowledge of his character, she signified to Frederic her intention of elevating that Nobleman to the crown. The choice being approved at Berlin, on the decease of Augustus, Catharine's forces and treasures overcame all opposition. Stanislaus was elected by violence; while the Russian ambassador, Prince Repnin, as the delegate and representative of the Empress, became in fact the despot and the oppressor of the Poles. The unfortunate King, who retained little more of royalty than the name, was only an engine in the hands of the Court of Peterburgh.

Frederic, attentive to the accomplishment of his primary objects, and who by no means intended that Poland should sink virtually into a Russian province, next sought the discontents of the great Polish Nobility. By means of his emissaries, he secretly stimulated them to throw off so ignominious a yoke, and to dethrone a prince illegally elected, as well as unable to afford them protection against the tyranny of Catharine. His insinuations were successful; confederations were formed in various provinces, and Poland soon became a theatre of civil war, of insurrection, and devastation. In order to maintain Stanislaus on the throne, Muscovites and Cossacks were quartered in all the principal cities; while Warsaw resembled rather a Russian garrison, than the capital of an independent Republic. It was not difficult for Frederic to excite the jealousy of the Turks at such an interference; and to represent to them, that under pretence of reducing the Polish rebels to obedience, Catharine in effect rendered

dered the country a province of her Empire. At the same time he encouraged and exhorted the Court of Petersburg to engage in hostilities with the Porte. No exertions were omitted in order to inflame the two Sovereigns and Governments, already irritated against each other. War ensued between them, and was prosecuted with various success, in Asia as well as in Europe.

The object to which his policy had so long tended was now in some measure attained. Frederic having completely embroiled the Russians and Turks, at the same time that the Poles, exhausted by confederacies, added to the ravages of the plague, were incapable of resistance, turned his attention next to the Court of Vienna. Nothing could be effected without the Austrian consent and co-operation. With a view of studying the character of Joseph the Second, he therefore artfully caused a proposition to be made on his part for an interview between them. The Emperor accepted it; and the two Princes met at Neiss in Silesia, towards the end of August 1769. But, though the state

of Poland might there have been mentioned in general terms, it is certain that no plan or treaty for a partition of it took place. Whether matters were not then sufficiently ripe, or that Frederic perceived other obstacles to its immediate completion, it was not till the following autumn, in 1770, that after previously founding the Imperial Cabinet, the subject was fully discussed in the second interview of Frederic and Joseph, at Neustadt in Moravia. Prince Kaunitz accompanied the Emperor thither for the express purpose. His Prussian Majesty, who knew that without the Minister's approbation, he could not overcome the scruples of Maria Theresa, religious as well as political, exerted all his address to win the Prince. At the opera which was performed at Neustadt, Frederic constantly placed him by his side, took snuff out of his box, and affected for him the most distinguishing consideration. Joseph, young, ambitious, and eager to extend the dominions of the House of Austria, was not difficult to be persuaded. It may more naturally excite our astonishment,

nient, that a Minister such as Prince Kaunitz allowed himself to be convinced either of the policy, or of the necessity of the measure. As little can we conceive how so pious and circumspect a Princess as Maria Theresa could have been induced to lend her aid to a measure so repugnant to every principle of justice or rectitude. Such, however, was the fact. Frederick and Joseph spread before them the map of Poland, agreed on their respective shares, and fixed on the tract of country to be offered to the Empress of Russia, as her portion. These preliminaries being adjusted, the two Sovereigns parted.

In the course of the ensuing year appeared the fruits of the interview. By command of their respective Courts, the Austrian and Prussian embassadors at Petersburg signified to Catharine the determination of the Cabinets of Berlin and Vienna. They added at the same time, that the resolution was definitively taken on the part of those Sovereigns, at all events to seize on the provinces

vinces respectively allotted them; and it was plainly insinuated, that if she would not consent, or chose to reject her portion of the spoil, they knew how to compel her to it by force. The Empress, thus threatened and assailed, made the strongest remonstrances to Maria Theresa and her Ministers, whom she endeavoured to convince that they were over-reached by Frederic. But finding them impervious to arguments, and inflexible in their determination, and being engaged in a war with the Porte which occupied all her forces, while it drained her treasury, Catherine had no alternative left except acquiescence. After a proper delay therefore, necessary in order to prepare manifestos, the armies of the three Powers, which had previously approached the frontiers of Poland, marched into the country, and sequestered the territories respectively allotted to them. They then compelled the unfortunate Stanislaus to convoke a Diet, in which he ratified his own degradation, and that of his subjects, by giving

giving to their usurpations the mock sanction of legislative and deliberative consent.

After having viewed the springs, and followed the movements of this extraordinary transaction, which is without precedent in modern history, it is natural to ask, Which of the three Sovereigns has been the greatest gainer by the division? No doubt whatsoever can be entertained on the point, by such as have examined or inquired with impartiality. Unquestionably it was not Catharine, since she might be considered as already mistress of all Poland. Her troops and her ambassador gave laws in Warsaw equally to the King and to the Republic. The Duchy of Courland was not more subjected, or more dependent on her orders. Every motive of policy dictated to her, not to aggrandize two powerful European states her neighbours, at the expence of Poland. The portion which has been assigned to her, is indeed a fertile, extensive, and important tract of country, contiguous to her own dominions on the west, and including a great

great part of Lithuania, as well as Polish Livonia: but, comparatively estimated, it adds little to her revenues, power, or political consideration.

The Austrian share, locally as well as financially considered, is indeed more valuable. By its position it covers Hungary and Moravia, while it extends the Imperial frontier on that side, far beyond the Carpathian Mountains, to the distant confines of Podolia and Moldavia. The mines of Wielicza, which may enable the Empress Queen to supply all Poland with salt, form a considerable permanent source of revenue; and the population cannot be estimated in those provinces, at a smaller number than two millions.

But these advantages, great as they must be separately allowed in themselves, sink on a comparison with the political benefits derived to Prussia from the partition of Poland. Even Silesia, on the conquest of which Frederick naturally prides himself, was not, in my estimate, so vast or so solid an acquisition

tion to the Monarchy as Polish Prussia. It suffices to look at its geographical position, in order to be convinced of the fact in all its force. Though less in mere extent than the Austrian and Russian shares, it far exceeds them in fertility of soil, in the number of cities, industry, and faculties of raising pecuniary supplies. Not only the Vistula, from the gates of Thorn to those of Dantzic, together with the whole commerce of that river, are become Prussian. The circumstance which renders them inestimable to Frederic, is, that he has joined his electoral dominions of Brandenburg and the Duchy of Pomerania, to his kingdom of Prussia. They were previously dissevered by a tract of country which incapacitated them in a great degree from lending mutual succours, when invaded by a foreign enemy; especially by a Russian. He may now be said to have almost realized the "Regnum Balticum," without shedding a drop of blood; and he stretches in an uninterrupted line, from the mouths of the
Oder

Oder, along the southern shore of the Baltic, to the frontiers of Courland and Samogitia.

Its future effects on Europe are incalculable. Catharine may continue to dictate her pleasure in the city of Warsaw; but Frederic, by holding the Vistula in his possession, retains the keys of Poland, and can prevent the importation or exportation of almost every article of trade. Dantzic and Thorn, whatever resistance they may make, must, sooner or later, become a part of his dominions. The Cabinet of Vienna will one day perceive, that in consenting to the partition of Poland they violated not less the laws of true policy, than those of morality and justice. They were in fact over-reached by his Prussian Majesty at the interview of Neustadt, notwithstanding the specious advantages with which he dazzled Joseph, and deluded Prince Kaunitz. Probably they are already sensible, when too late, of their error; and would gladly restore their own portion of the plunder, if
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it were possible to reduce Frédéric to his former situation.

The final destiny of this dismembered and impoverished country forms a curious and interesting subject of political inquiry; doubt, and speculation. Will the Crown of Poland and the Republic long continue to exist even in name? Will the Family of Poniatowski be rendered hereditary? May not circumstances possibly arise, that shall again restore to Poland her ravished provinces? Or may not her total destruction as an independent power, and the incorporation of her remaining territory with the three great surrounding monarchies be an event neither distant nor improbable? These discussions would lead me too far; and on one of them I may have occasion to say something when I speak of the King, and his nephew Prince Stanislaus. If however appearances may be trusted, there is strong reason to believe, that the final dissolution of Poland cannot be very remote; though the precise time must naturally be accelerated

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or retarded by a variety of circumstances. Even the Poles themselves foresee it as inevitable, and admit that in the wretched condition of their country, it is a consummation rather to be desired than deprecated by every individual.

In addition to the radical defects of the constitution, which irresistibly operated to sink Poland below the level of the neighbouring states, and to deprive it of the means of resistance against foreign violence; the moral principles of its dissolution are so numerous, as to leave little hope of remedy or of resuscitation. The great Nobility are depraved, corrupt, and destitute of enlightened patriotism: their education and habits extinguish every spark of public virtue. In their infancy they are surrounded by domestics or preceptors, who nourish those fatal prejudices and ideas of superiority so calculated to harden the human heart. Even while in their cradles, the peasants are brought to kiss their feet, and to shew them marks of homage. They are taught

taught to regard their vassals as creatures of a separate species. On the other hand, they are not brought up in principles of obedience to the laws, or of deference to the Sovereign and to the civil Magistrate. How can they be so, in a country where the courts of justice are corrupt, mercenary, and venal beyond imagination; where the Crown, at the death of every Sovereign, is either bought, or transferred by violence; and where the punishment of crimes is almost unknown! Assassinations, robberies, frauds, divorces on the most frivolous pretences, invasions of property, and a rage for play which knows no limits; these infractions of public and private order are committed with impunity among the higher classes. A total dissolution of morals is the inevitable consequence. Even the sense of shame, and dread of infamy, anterior and superior to all written law, seem here to have lost much of their force, and scarcely to operate as restraints.

If such be the state of the upper orders, no resource is to be found in the people. The very term is inapplicable; for there is in fact *no Polish People*. Never was the title of *Republic* so abused and prostituted; as well might the name be applied to Algiers or to Tunis. Of the intermediate rank of citizens, merchants, artisans, and mechanics, the number is so small and inconsiderable, that they may be regarded as non-existent to any beneficial purpose. In a country where commerce is in a manner extinct; manufactures, except those of the first necessity, nearly unknown; industry discouraged; arts unprotected; and only the cultivation of the ground that can be considered as in any degree flourishing; the middle class of men must necessarily diminish, and be of no account. The peasants are indeed a numerous body, though much reduced by successive years of anarchy, famine, and calamity: but they remain in the same state of poverty, vassalage, and ignorance, which has been their invariable

lot during many ages. Attached to the glebe, and sold with it, they are equally strangers to the name and to the possession of freedom. Inured to domestic servitude, it may even be questioned whether they are capable of receiving such a present, except by insensible gradations. A considerable lapse of time, the introduction of arts, and the general diffusion of knowledge, could alone render them able to improve the blessings of civil liberty, or elevate them to the rank of subjects, from the condition of slaves. Such a change is, I fear, beyond either hope or calculation; and whatever may be the final destiny of this unfortunate country, the greater part of its inhabitants will probably continue to exist in nearly the same state of political and personal degradation. Here I shall finish this letter, and remain, &c.

LETTER XX.

Origin and history of the family of Poniatowski. —Anecdotes of the father of Stanislaus Augustus.—Particulars of the life of Count Poniatowski, previous to his election to the crown of Poland.—His elevation to the throne. —His conduct in the beginning of his reign.—Luxury, pleasures, and profusion of the court. Miserable state of Poland.—Account of the attempt to assassinate Stanislaus, and his escape. —Punishment of the conspirators.—Conduct of the King on the partition of Poland.—Character, personal qualities, defects, and anecdotes of Stanislaus.—His private life.—Family—Uncertainty of his future destiny.

WARSAW, July 17th, 1778.

AFTER having traced the principal causes which led to the partition of Poland, and endeavoured to investigate its consequences, immediate as well as remote, it is natural to turn our regards towards the King. As an elective sovereign, without
queen

queen or descendants, he stands alone; and in whatever point of view we consider him, he is an object of no common interest. Raised from the condition of a private nobleman or gentleman, to a throne, maintained in it by foreign support, escaped by a sort of miracle from the hands of assassins, and still nominally the head of a dismembered and expiring monarchy; all the incidents of his history awaken attention. His amiable personal qualities, the precarious nature of his present elevated situation, and the uncertainty of his future destiny, excite regard and curiosity blended with anxiety and compassion. Never in fact was any prince less an object of envy. I have had opportunities of seeing him, and of forming some opinion of his character from my personal observation: but it is from much higher sources of information that I shall speak of Stanislaus: they have been so ample, as rather to leave me under an embarrassment what to conceal, than what to dis-

close. Before I mention him personally, it may not be improper to say something of his descent, and of his connexions.

The family of Poniatowski is noble, and consequently like that of every "Stolnick," or private gentleman, is eligible to the crown; neither commerce nor even servitude disqualifying for the elevation. On the day when Stanislaus was chosen King, Mr. Wroughton, the English minister at Warsaw, was struck with surprise at seeing his butler buckle on a sabre, and without asking his permission, walk out to the "Szopa." This spot is the place where the ceremony of electing the Polish sovereigns is performed, about half an English mile distant from the capital. "Sir," said the man to him, by way of apology for his conduct, "I am noble; and though I act in the capacity of one of your domestics, I am not less competent to be raised to the throne, than the first nobleman in the republic." In effect, the present King's descent on the paternal

paternal side is by no means illustrious. It is well attested, and universally acknowledged, that his grandfather, who was very poor, possessed scarcely any hereditary patrimony. Far from arriving at, or aspiring to any public honours and dignities, he acted in the humble capacity of an overseer or steward.

His son, the late Count Poniatowski, who first raised the family from obscurity, was not only a very distinguished and celebrated person, uncommonly graceful in his figure, but endowed with great qualities of mind. When young, he married a noble lady of high extraction, the Countess Oginska, though the marriage was never avowed, nor was she known in the world by any other name than that of Oginska. He afterwards, in the beginning of the present century, became colonel of the Swedish guards of Stanislaus Lecinski, King of Poland; accompanied Charles the Twelfth at the unfortunate battle of Pultowa; and eminently contributed to save that monarch, after

the action, from falling into the hands of the Czar Peter, by his personal exertions, which Voltaire has commemorated and immortalized. On his return from Bender to his native country, Poniatowski, about the year 1720, espoused the Princess Constantia Czartoriski, sister to the present Prince of that name. Though she brought him only an inconsiderable fortune in marriage, and was little favoured by nature in the article of personal beauty, yet the alliance with so powerful and opulent a family as Czartoriski, contributed much to his elevation. After having taken no mean part in the administration of Poland, during the two reigns of Augustus the Second and Third, under whom he filled some of the highest offices of State, he died about twenty years ago, at an advanced age, in eminent reputation for his talents and virtues.

Of four sons whom he left behind him by the Princess Czartoriski, his present Majesty, Stanislaus Augustus, is the second. In the spring of the year 1757, when just
twenty-five

twenty-five years old, the interest of his family procured him from the late King of Poland, an appointment to the court of Peterburgh in a public capacity. He was not indeed sent thither as envoy from the Crown and Republic; but as the Minister of Augustus exclusively to the Empress Elizabeth, in which quality he took an oath before his departure, to support and maintain the interests of the Saxon family. They afterwards complained loudly of his breach of faith and honour, when they discovered that instead of endeavouring to perpetuate the Polish crown in Augustus's line, which was the great object of his mission; he had, by his political intrigues with the Great Duchess Catherine laid the foundations of his own future exaltation to that high dignity.

Previous to his setting out for Russia, he obtained, not without difficulty, after much solicitation on the part of himself and his friends, the riband of the "White Eagle," then the only order of Knighthood existing
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in Poland. A very singular circumstance took place at his investiture, the notoriety of which leaves no doubt of its truth, and which every person in Warsaw with whom I ever conversed on the subject, is ready to confirm. When the Sovereign confers the order, it is customary with the riband to present likewise the star, round which is embroidered the device. The motto of *the King*, is different from that of *the subject*; the former being,

“ Pro fide, *Grege*, lege;”

whereas the knights wear it,

“ Pro fide, *Rege*, lege.”

By an accident which never happened before, instead of a star bearing the device as worn by the subject, a royal star had been given to Count Pomiatowski. The mistake was not immediately discovered; but when it reached Count Bruhl, the first minister
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of Augustus, he instantly redemanded the insignia of the order, as having been inadvertently conferred, and they were of course restored. The affair excited much remark at the time; and when Stanislaus afterwards ascended the throne, it was recollected, and considered as an omen of his future fortune.

Count Poniatowski, on his arrival at Petersburg, soon became personally acceptable to the Great Duchess Catharine, who then led a retired life in the court of Elizabeth, by whom she was not beloved. That the connexion between her and Stanislaus was of the closest and tenderest nature, no doubt can be entertained. Even at this hour, the King, when he speaks of the Empress to those with whom he is unreserved, mentions her as an object of his warmest attachment as a woman, not less than of his admiration and respect as a Sovereign. How far, during the period to which I allude, she might have given him hopes or assurances of her support in placing him on the Throne, whenever

whenever the crown of Poland should become vacant, it is difficult to say with precision. Any such promises however, if made, could only have been contingent, vague, and almost visionary ; since her own exclusive elevation to the throne of Russia was then apparently by no means a probable event. Yet, that she did hold out to him such prospects, is universally believed and asserted here. She doubtless saw that Elizabeth, who sensibly declined in health, might not long continue to reign. The weakness and incapacity of her husband Peter, and still more his imprudence, or contempt of the Russians, she was likewise aware, would probably open a way for herself to the supreme power. Augustus the Third was sinking in years ; and at his death the Russians must necessarily have the preponderating influence at Warsaw, in naming a successor, as they had done at the decease of his father, in 1733. Under these circumstances she certainly might, and she probably did assure him of her

her exertions in his favor, if Fortune should enable her to afford him effectual assistance.

So convinced were the Saxon Ministers of Stanislaus's carrying on some secret negotiations or projects in concert with the Great Duchess, to the prejudice of Augustus's interest, that they recalled him from Peterburgh. Prince Charles of Saxony then resided in the court of Elizabeth; by whom he was much cherished and protected. Catharine, inconsolable at the intelligence of her favorite's recall, condescended to apply to the Prince, and besought his interposition with the King his father, to allow Poniatowski's continuance in Russia. He, who was then in high favor with the Empress, and had been recently raised by her to the dignity of Duke of Courland, refused to gratify the Great Duchess, or to interfere in favor of her lover. Stanislaus, after many vain efforts to prolong his stay, reluctantly quitted Peterburgh; but Catharine never forgave the rejection of her request,
and

and severely revenged it in the sequel on the House of Saxony.

After the decease of Elizabeth, Peter the Third, during his short reign, extended his views to Poland. He had even destined the crown, whenever it should become vacant, for Prince Adam Czartoriski, cousin by the maternal side to Stanislaus; a young nobleman, who from his descent, immense fortune, expectations, and alliances, might justly pretend to such an elevation. But the sudden deposition of Peter in the same year, opened a new scene; and it was followed at no long interval, by the death of Augustus the Third, who expired at Dresden in October, 1763. Catharine instantly turned her principal attention towards Warsaw. Eleven months of Interregnum elapsed before the vacant throne was filled; and her choice, however it might have been in reality fixed, long appeared to be doubtful. Various Polish noblemen were proposed as candidates: but at length, Prince Repnin the Russian

Russian ambassador named Stanislaus, Count Poniatowski, as the fortunate object of the Empress's selection. It is not my intention to enter upon this part of his story, which is matter of historical publicity. Force having overruled the deliberations of the Diet, and silenced all opposition, Stanislaus was declared King.

His election might be considered in fact as not more illegal than the three preceding ones ; in each of which, Saxon, Swedish, or Muscovite troops, aided by gold, had raised the pretender whose cause they espoused, to the throne of Poland. But in all former instances, the foreign interference was either immediately withdrawn ; or at least better concealed after the elevation of the successful candidate, in whose behalf it had been employed. Catharine the Second did not imitate the moderation of her predecessor the Empress Anne, in this respect. Far from meaning to render Stanislaus independent of her protection ; on the contrary, she clearly manifested her intention
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to retain him in her immediate dependence, and to govern Poland as a province, under the forms of a free Republic. Her troops, quartered in the vicinity of Warsaw, equally awed the Sovereign whom she had created, and the nation which she oppressed. Accustomed as the Poles had always been to external interference in the election of their kings, they were not broken down to slavery. Resistance, confederations, insurrections, and civil war under every form, laid waste the country; while the King remained a passive or a helpless spectator of the multiplied calamities inflicted on his unfortunate subjects.

The first years of his reign, from 1764 to 1767, were nevertheless devoted almost entirely to pleasure and dissipation; a conduct the more culpable and censurable, as he had already passed the period of human life, at which the violence of the passions may be pleaded in excuse. When crowned in November 1764, he wanted only two months of thirty-three years complete. In-
stead

stead of adopting measures which indicated any vigour of mind, and which might eventually lead to his emancipation, Stanislaus confirmed his political chains, by manifesting a disposition at once yielding, indolent, and submissive. No economy was observed in his expences, and no limits were affixed to his profusion. Three parties, on his accession, disputed the government of the new monarch. At the head of the first were his two uncles, the Princes Czartoriski, whose advanced age, high rank, and character, seemed to point them out as the proper advisers and conductors of their nephew. They did in fact enjoy for some time, a considerable degree of power and influence. The second faction consisted of his Majesty's three brothers; the Great Chamberlain, the General; and the Abbé, now Bishop of Plozko. The third party was composed of the ladies of the court, among whom the principal figure was the Princess Lubomirska, daughter to Prince Czartoriski. Her personal attractions, accomplishments, and intimate

timate connexion with the King her cousin, gave her an ascendancy over him, which did not tend to raise him in the public estimation.

While clouds were collecting on every side; regardless of futurity, he passed the greater part of his time among women, occupied in pursuits of gallantry, in puerile amusements, or in luxurious exhibitions of taste and magnificence. Far from acquiring in his character of a Sovereign, the esteem of his subjects, he did not even retain the good opinion of the Empress; who, it is evident, well knew how to appreciate the qualities and talents of her former lover. When Count Rzewuski, who is now "Marechal de la Cour," was at Peterburgh some years ago, Catharine conversing with him on the subject of Stanislaus, "Le Roi mon maitre," said Rzewuski, "prend Henri Quatre pour son modele."—"Apparemment," answered the Empress, "ce n'est que dans ses foiblesses qu'il veut imiter le Roi de France."

If the present King had possessed a strong and vigorous mind; if to economy he had added policy, decision, and energy of character; it is probable that Poland might have been preserved from total ruin. But, had he been cast in such a mould, Catharine, instead of placing him on the throne, would doubtless have sedulously excluded him from it. An obvious means of strengthening and supporting himself against the Russian tyranny, was by contracting a foreign matrimonial alliance. Its expediency was strongly inculcated by his real friends, who urged him to open a negotiation for the purpose; and it is with reason he believed that he might have obtained the hand of a princess of Saxony. Such a connexion would perhaps have tended eventually to conciliate, as well as to attach, the Cabinet of Vienna, without whose approbation and participation, the dismemberment of the kingdom which we have witnessed, could not have taken place. But Stanislaus, whatever were his motives, never would be in-

duced to make the requisite demand to the Court of Dresden. He was unquestionably dissuaded from it by the ladies who surrounded him, and who dreaded the extinction of their influence on the arrival of a foreign queen. There is not any probability that he will now ever be married; nor if he were so, that it could have any political consequences. The destiny of Poland is irrevocably decided.

Entertainments of the most studied luxury, comedies, operas, and all the diversions of an effeminate or dissolute court, occupied every moment, and seemed to leave him no time for any serious business. These spectacles emptied the royal coffers, and plunged the King, though his revenue was ample, into a state of poverty. Many of them cost very considerable sums, and in taste might vie with the most splendid exhibitions of the last or present century. The courtiers in their turn gave similar entertainments for the amusement of the Sovereign. A grandson of Augustus the Second,

cond; Count Moszinski, (with whose mother I am well acquainted at Dresden) was constituted at once favourite, minister, and director of the royal pleasures. He possessed great delicacy of fancy; his prodigality in the indulgence of it, knew no bounds; and after having expended his whole fortune in a short time, he now subsists wholly on the bounty of Stanislaus. In one of the superb fêtes given by Moszinski to his royal master, there seems to have been combined every variety, which an elegant imagination could invent or assemble. Mr. Wroughton, who was present at most or all of these entertainments, favoured me with a description of the one in question, which I shall repeat, as it will convey to you some idea of Polish manners and magnificence.

It took place in summer, and consisted of sixty persons; thirty of each sex. After a sumptuous repast, a comedy was performed in a building constructed expressly for the occasion. The whole company, habited in fancy dresses, next embarked in barges on

the Vistula, attended by bands of music. An island, fortified and defended by women in the dress of Amazons, the Queen Hyppolita at their head, having presented itself to the view, a mock combat ensued, in which the King was the principal assailant. They did not however make a long, or an obstinate resistance; and Hyppolita, followed by her female train, laid their spears at the feet of the royal Theseus; for whose diversion they then exhibited an opera. A supper and a ball succeeded: while on other islands in the stream of the Vistula, were displayed fire-works and illuminations. It must be admitted that nothing more classically elegant could have been given by the Princes of the House of Medicis, at Pisa, or at Florence. But such costly amusements were ill suited to Stanislaus's pecuniary resources. The expence of the evening did not fall short of near six thousand pounds sterling; and in the course of one year, the King laid out about forty-five thousand pounds in theatrical or musical exhibitions.

Mr. Wroughton, who had known Stanislaus in a private station as Count Poniatowski, and had always lived with him on terms of the most intimate familiarity, beheld with regret his profusion, and determined to remonstrate with him. Using the freedom of an old and faithful friend, he ventured to represent to his Majesty the imprudence of such expence, which while it impoverished himself, obliged no one. The King, far from being offended, listened with attention; but attempted to justify it as political, since it tended to render him popular, by conciliating the affections of his subjects. "I imitate," said he, "my great predecessor for Augustus the Second, one of the most amiable of princes, who displayed the same profusion from similar motives." It was in vain that the English Minister endeavoured to convince him how ill the precedent applied: Stanislaus continued incorrigible. He lavished immense sums at the same time, in constructing a palace at Ujazdow, which I went to see some days ago, and which exhibits at this moment a

striking monument of folly and prodigality. Ujazdow stands on a hill, about three quarters of a mile from Warsaw, and was begun by Augustus the Second; at whose decease it fell to a Prince of the Lubomirski family, from whom it was purchased by Stanislaus. However incredible it may appear, there is no doubt that he has expended above two hundred thousand pounds on the edifice. It is a prodigious pile of building, resembling more a convent than a palace, unfinished, ruinous, and will probably remain for ever uninhabited.

In the midst of these occupations, if such they can be deemed, Poland became a scene of mortality, insurrection, and carnage. Many thousand persons were carried off by the plague. The confederate nobles, who maintained the illegality of the King's election, endeavoured at once to depose him, and to expel their oppressors the Russians. Saxony furnished them with pecuniary supplies; while the plunder of such provinces or towns as refused to join them, contributed to support their troops. The cabinet of
Berlin

Berlin fanned the flames, at the same time that France and Austria extended to the insurgents indirect assistance in men or in money. But, though embarrassed by the war in which she was engaged with the Turks, Catharine nevertheless repressed the Poles, cut in pieces their confederacies, and asserted her superiority. To so wretched a state was the country reduced, that Stanislaus hardly esteemed himself safe even in Warsaw; and at the distance of a league from the metropolis in every direction, had he ventured so far, he would have been carried off by the rebels. Thus a prisoner in his own capital, his situation was, it must be owned, at once the most helpless and the most humiliating: he owed his crown solely to the Russians, and a murmur on his part against their excesses, might precipitate him from the eminence to which they had raised him. Even his remonstrances to them against the outrages which they committed, were treated with disregard, or heard with indifference.

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On the other hand, no resource presented itself to Stanislaus, in the affection or loyalty of his subjects. To the confederates, as they denied his title, and detested his person, he could not fly for refuge. Such was their antipathy to him, that they resolved to put him to death, as the primary author of the calamities of his country, and as a man wholly dependent on Catharine the Second, their enemy and their tyrant. They executed their purpose in part, with astonishing audacity and success; though it is difficult to conceive what benefit could have accrued to them, or to Poland, from the destruction of Stanislaus, if it had been effected. The Empress would easily have substituted in his place another phantom of royalty, had such a one been requisite; and her victorious forces would not less have suppressed every effort on their part at national emancipation. The attempt to assassinate the King, was in itself an event so extraordinary, and all the circumstances attending

attending it are so incredible, but at the same time so characteristic of the nation, that I shall give it in detail from indisputable authorities.

Pulawski, a Polish nobleman, who commanded one of the many bodies of the confederate troops, by which the country was then ravaged and desolated, first set on foot the enterprise to assassinate Stanislaus. He is acknowledged by the Russians themselves, to have been a leader of eminent military talents, which he displayed on a variety of occasions. Having chosen three chiefs for conducting the attempt, named Lukawski, Strawinski, and Kofinski, he allowed them to select thirty-seven other associates for its execution, the whole band being about forty in number. Willing to add the solemnity of a religious obligation to the motives of interest, the enthusiasm of party spirit, and the hopes of reward; Pulawski made the three chiefs take an oath, their hands joined between his, either to deliver the King alive into his possession,

or

or in case that should be impossible, to put him to death. This ceremony took place at the town of Czeszchow, in Great Poland; Durini, who is now Vice-legate at Avignon, and who was then the papal Nuncio at the Court of Warsaw, being at Czeszchow, lent his sanction to the enterprise. Instigated by furious zeal against the Dissidents, whom he detested as heretics, and whom he believed to be protected by Stanislaus, he even proceeded further, and bestowed his benediction on the weapons delivered to the conspirators for the purpose of assassinating their Sovereign. The present age scarcely can furnish so striking an instance of sanguinary bigotry, which resembles rather the spirit of the times of Catharine of Medicis, and Philip the Second, than the character of a period distinguished for religious toleration, and almost indifference.

The conspirators, thus doubly furnished with spiritual exhortation and temporal arms, left Czeszchow, and set out for Warsaw.

low. It was, however by no means easy to obtain entrance into the city, which, though not fortified, was surrounded with ditches thrown up to prevent the introduction of the plague; and at different parts of which works, Russian or Polish sentinels were stationed. In order to surmount the impediment, they had therefore recourse to stratagem. On the second of November 1771, they disguised themselves as peasants; their saddles, arms, and uniforms being concealed under the hay which they brought in waggons. The artifice completely succeeded; and as their numbers exposed them every moment to discovery, it was determined not to postpone the execution of the attempt. Circumstances particularly favourable, enabled them to proceed to action on the following night.

The King, upon that evening, Sunday, the third of November, had paid a visit to his uncle, Prince Czartoriski, grand chancellor of Lithuania. Between nine and ten o'clock he set out to return to the palace, which

which is not much more than a quarter of a mile distant, through the most frequented and populous streets of Warsaw. The night was extremely dark, and as I have already observed, the capital of Poland has no lamps. Stanislaus had in the coach with him an aide-du-camp of the name of Poniatowski, a distant relation of his family; and about fifteen or sixteen attendants accompanied the carriage, some of whom were armed with swords or sabres. Scarcely had he proceeded two hundred paces from the hotel of Prince Czartoriski, when the coach was surrounded by a band of men, who commanded the postillion to stop on pain of instant death. They, at the same time, fired a number of shots into the carriage, several of which passed through his Majesty's fur cloak. I have examined it, and seen the holes made in it by the bullets, which sufficiently attest the magnitude of the danger which he incurred. It seems almost miraculous that he should have then escaped without a wound of any kind.

Among

Among the train of attendants who followed the coach, only one, a Heyduque, attempted to resist, or to defend his master. He was shot in that gallant act, and expired next morning of the wound which he received. I ought not to omit that he was a protestant, and that the King allows a pension to his widow and family. But his example was not imitated by any other of the persons present, who flying in different directions, abandoned their Sovereign to his fate. Even the aide-du-camp, who had the honour to be seated with Stanislaus in the carriage, and who bore the same name, ignominiously forsook him, and concealed himself from the rage of the assassins, by taking shelter under a little wooden bridge laid across the gutter of the street. He is become, as he merited, universally despicable, and now lives obscurely in Lithuania.

Meanwhile the King, who, to his honour, seems never to have lost his presence of mind throughout the whole transaction, finding
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that he was left nearly alone in the midst of the ruffians, opened the door of the carriage, with design to effect, if possible, his escape. The darkness of the night favoured the attempt, and he had already got out of the coach, when the assassins seized him by the hair, exclaiming in Polish, with horrible execrations, "We have thee now: thy hour is come!" One of them discharged a pistol at him so close, that he felt the heat of the flash; while another cut him so severely across the head with his sabre, that it penetrated to the skull. They then laid hold of his Majesty by the collar, and two among them mounting on horseback, dragged him along the ground between their horses, at full gallop, for near five hundred paces, through the streets of Warsaw. However wonderful it may appear, they met with no impediment or opposition. A Russian sentinel, at some distance from the place where they first stopped and seized the King, hearing a noise, called to them; but, as they answered, or pretended to

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to answer in his own language, he allowed them to pass without molestation, conceiving them to be a Russ patrol.

All was confusion and disorder during this time at the Royal Palace, where the scattered and terrified domestics had carried the alarm. The foot-guards ran immediately to the spot from whence Stanislaus had been forced away ; but, finding nothing except his hat all bloody, and the bag of his hair, they concluded that he was murdered. Throughout the capital, universal consternation prevailed, and the conspirators profited of the terror, to bear away their prize. Perceiving however, that he was not able to follow them longer on foot, and that he had already almost lost his respiration, from the violence with which they had dragged him along, they set him on horseback. They then redoubled their speed, from the fear of being overtaken. Arriving at the ditch or lines drawn round Warsaw, they compelled him to leap his horse across, in performing which the ani-

mal fell twice, and at the second fall broke his leg. Regardless of the circumstance, they immediately mounted his Majesty on another, covered as he was with blood and dirt.

The principal difficulties attending the enterprise seemed now to be at an end, since they had got clear of the metropolis: but the darkness of the night, which had hitherto facilitated its success, impeded its completion; and the precipitation of the chiefs, who, instead of terminating the business, as they might easily have done, were anxious to claim their respective shares of merit in its execution, finally extricated the King. No sooner had he passed the lines, than they all fell upon him, and began to plunder him; Lukawski tearing off with his own hand the riband of the order of the "Black Eagle," which Stanislaus wore round his neck, and the diamond cross appendant to it. His motive for this act of violence was not so much to possess himself of the King's effects; as to prove to

Pulawski and the confederates, that Stanislaus was a prisoner in their hands, and already on his way to the army. The riband of the "Black Eagle," which had been conferred by the King of Prussia on his Polish Majesty when Count Poniatowski, would be, he conceived with reason, an incontestable evidence to his employers, that the attempt had been crowned with complete success. Lukawski then quitted the King, as did Strawinski, and a great number of their followers, who carried the intelligence to their respective leaders; leaving Stanislaus in the custody of Kofinski, and six of the band. Of all the articles in his Majesty's pockets, only his tablets escaped their rapacity; and he requested of them to leave him his handkerchief, which they did without difficulty.

After the departure of Lukawski, and so many of his associates, the few remaining conspirators, headed by Kofinski, continued their flight; but, as they could distinguish nothing on account of the dark-

ness, and were besides unacquainted with the ground, they knew not which way to direct their course. At every step, from the inequality, or the slippery nature of the fields, through which they wandered, the horses were unable to keep their legs: they therefore obliged the King to follow them on foot with only one shoe, the other being lost in the dirt. Finding, nevertheless, that they only strayed through the meadows, and apprehensive, every moment, of being overtaken, they again placed him on horseback, two of them holding him each by the hand, and a third leading his horse by the bridle. From the time of their passing the lines, the inferior conspirators incessantly demanded of Kofinski, whether the moment was not arrived in which to put the King to death. Their demands became more eager and clamorous, in proportion to the increase of the difficulties which seemed to prevent their escape.

It is impossible, on a review of the whole transaction, not to allow that Stanislaus
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was cool and master of himself, under circumstances so calculated to bereave him, or any man, of his usual recollection. Perceiving that his conductors were taking a path which would lead them to a village named Burakow, in which some Russians were stationed, he warned them not to enter it, and apprized them of the danger. This intimation, which at first sight appears to have been so extraordinary, or injudicious, was nevertheless dictated by admirable good sense. He apprehended, not without reason, that on being assailed by a Russian guard, the assassins would instantly complete their work; and after cutting him to pieces with their sabres, consult their own safety in flight. By giving them notice of the risk that they incurred, he in some degree gained their confidence. In effect, he remarked that his conduct seemed to soften them, as it implied that he did not meditate to make his escape out of their hands. The attitude in which he was held down on the saddle, becoming so painful as

to be quite insupportable, he entreated of them at least to allow him to sit more at his ease, to mount him on another horse, and to give him a boot. They gratified him in his requests; and continuing their progress, as chance directed, across almost impassable lands, they arrived at the entrance of the wood of Bielany, only a league distant from Warsaw.

That metropolis meanwhile presented a scene of general confusion, no person knowing what road the assassins had taken, and many conceiving that it was more dangerous to pursue, than to allow them to carry off their prey; since if overtaken, they would infallibly massacre the King in the first instance. Several of the Nobility mounted, nevertheless, their horses, and following the track of the conspirators as well as they were able, got to the place where Stanislaus had passed the lines. There they found his "Pelisse," which had been left behind in the precipitation of his flight; it was pierced with holes made by the bullets or sabres, and

and stained with blood in many parts. After such testimonies, little doubt could be entertained that its owner was no more, and the King's death was universally considered as certain.

During this time he still remained in the hands of Kofinski, and his six associates, who continued to advance with him into the wood of Bielany; when they were suddenly hailed by a Russian patrol. They immediately held a sort of council; at the end of which, four disappeared. The other three forced him to dismount and walk; but scarcely had a quarter of an hour elapsed, before a second Russian guard challenged them. Terrified at the danger, the two inferior conspirators fled, leaving Stanislaus alone with Kofinski; who holding his sabre over the King, menaced him with instant death, if he attempted delay or resistance. Overcome with fatigue, added to the pain of his bruises, he only implored his conductor to stop, and to suffer him to take a moment's repose. But Kofinski re-

fused, at the same time informing him that beyond the wood they should find a carriage. Thus compelled, they proceeded together till they found themselves at the gate of the convent of Bielany.

His Majesty now began to conceive some hopes of extricating himself, which were increased by perceiving that his conductor, who wandered without knowing where he was, seemed to be lost in thought, and agitated by reflections. Desirous to profit of these symptoms of irresolution, he said to Kofinski, "I see you are embarrassed which way to proceed; let me therefore enter the convent of Bielany, and do you provide for your own safety."---"No," replied he, "I have sworn." They continued therefore to walk on in silence till they came to Mariemont, a small palace belonging to the Elector of Saxony, not more than two miles from Warsaw. Kofinski expressed some satisfaction at recognising the place, and the King still earnestly requesting a moment's rest, the other at length consented

sented. They sat down on the ground together; Stanislaus endeavouring to improve the time, in order to soften his conductor, and induce him to favour, or permit his escape.

To this end he represented to Kosinski the atrocity of the crime which he committed, in having undertaken to murder his Sovereign, and the invalidity of any oath administered to him, for the perpetration of so heinous an offence. In reply the other alledged, that far from being the protector of his people, Stanislaus acted as their oppressor; and he particularly enumerated some recent acts of government, which in their operation were not less pernicious than they were cruel. The unfortunate King admitted the fact; but in his justification assured Kosinski, that the measures alluded to, were carried into execution by a stronger power than his; namely the authority of the Baron de Stackelberg, the Russian ambassador. "It was no longer
"ago than this very day," added he, "that
"I took

"I took him aside at the drawing-room, and remonstrated with him for some time, upon the severity of the orders in question." "That may be true," answered Kosinski; "for I was myself at Court this morning, concealed among the crowd; and I remarked that you was for some minutes engaged in earnest conversation at the window, with the Russian Minister."

This incident seemed to make such an impression on his mind, that he even let drop expressions of concern and remorse; but suddenly recollecting himself, "If," said he, "I should consent, and conduct your back to Warsaw, what will be the consequence? I shall be taken and executed." The reflection plunged him into new irresolution. "I give you my word of honour," answered Stanislaus, "that no harm shall happen to you; but if you doubt my promise, escape while there is still time! I can find my way to some place of security, and I will certainly direct your pursuers to

“ to take the contrary road to that which
“ you have chosen.” Touched by so generous an assurance, Kofinski, already shaken, could no longer contain his emotions: he threw himself at the King’s feet, implored his Majesty’s forgiveness for the crime which he had been led to commit, and swore to defend him against every enemy, relying totally on his generosity for pardon and preservation. The King reiterated his engagements of protection. Judging however, that it would be prudent to gain some asylum without delay, and recollecting that there was a mill at a little distance, he immediately made towards it. They arrived at the door in a few minutes.

Kofinski, by the King’s desire, knocked, but no answer was returned. He then broke a pane of glass in the window, and entreated that they would afford shelter to a nobleman who had been plundered by robbers. The master of the hut peremptorily refused, supposing them to be banditti, and for above half an hour continued

tinued to persist in his denial of opening the door. Stanislaus therefore at length approached, and speaking through the broken pane, endeavoured to persuade the miller to admit him under the roof; adding, "If we were robbers, as you apprehend, it would be easy for us to use violence, and to break the whole window, instead of one pane." The argument prevailed; they opened the door, and admitted him. He immediately wrote on his tablets, which had accidentally escaped the rapacity of the assassins, a few lines to General Cocceii, Colonel of the first regiment of foot-guards. They were literally as follows: "Par une espece de miracle je suis sauvé des mains des assassins. Je suis ici, au petit moulin de Mariemont. Venez au plutôt, me tirer d'ici. Je suis blessé, mais pas fort." It was not without the utmost difficulty that he could persuade any one to carry the note to Warsaw; as the people of the mill still believed him to be, what he professed himself, a
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gentleman who had been attacked and wounded by robbers. Kosiński offered to restore to his Majesty every thing which he had taken from his person, but Stanislaus left him all, except the blue riband of the "White Eagle."

On the arrival of the messenger at Warsaw, the general joy, heightened by astonishment, was incredible. General Cocceii, accompanied by a detachment of the guards, rode instantly to the mill, where he found Kosiński standing at the door with his sabre drawn, who admitted him as soon as he recognized his person. A scene equally curious and affecting took place on his entrance into the hut. The first object which presented itself, was the King stretched on the floor, covered with the miller's cloak, sunk into a sort of sleep or of insensibility, caused by fatigue. Cocceii threw himself at his Majesty's feet, calling him his Sovereign, and kissing his hand. It was then for the first time, that the miller and his family discovered the quality of their guest ;
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and they soon followed the example of the General, by throwing themselves on their knees. I have heard General Cocceii relate these circumstances, and I have been at the mill itself, rendered celebrated by so extraordinary an event: it is a wretched Polish hovel, remote from any house or habitation. Stanislaus has gratefully recompensed its owner, by building him a mill upon the Vistula, and adding to it a small pension.

About five o'clock in the morning; the King arrived in Cocceii's carriage, at his palace in the capital. Scarcely would the people credit the evidence of their senses, when they saw him return, or believe that he was still alive. Nothing could in fact be more wonderful, or more contrary to all probability. His wound, though deep, was not dangerous, and he soon recovered the personal bruises and injuries which he had suffered on that memorable night. But he long preserved, and still retains the impression made on his mind, by so desperate an attempt. Well aware how much the Con-
federates

federates detested, and considered him as the author of the calamities of Poland, he had always entertained apprehensions that their vengeance would aim at his life. Even now he cannot be considered as exempt from similar, or perhaps greater misfortunes.

On the day subsequent to his assassination, Mr. Wroughton hastened to congratulate him on his escape; and Stanislaus related to him the transaction, in nearly the same words which I have used. Then taking him by the hand, "I always believed," said he, "my dear Wroughton, that the Confederates would execute what you have witnessed, and I have proved but too right in my conjecture. Yet, merely for my life I was not afraid, from the moment that instead of dispatching me, as they might have done, I found that the Conspirators carried me out of the city. I imagined indeed, that their intention was to conduct me to the confederate army, and to put me to death: but I nourished some faint hopes, that if I
could

“ could convince them I had never merited
“ their hatred, I might succeed in winning
“ them over to my side. I even squeezed
“ Kofinski's hand in mine, while he plundered me of my effects; hopeful to
“ awaken in him sentiments of loyalty, or
“ at least of compassion.” Stanislaus, who knew his countrymen well, relied not without reason, on the levity, flexibility, and inconsistency of character which distinguish the Poles as a nation.

It is hardly to be credited, that of three chiefs to whom the enterprize was intrusted, two should quit him at the most critical moment, in order to carry the intelligence to their employers, instead of fulfilling the object of their attempt; and that the third should be won over by Stanislaus, to conduct him back to his capital. Nor is it more easy to conceive how men, when once worked up by enmity and fanaticism to undertake such a crime, should leave it incomplete, after all the difficulties attending it were surmounted. Damien, who failed
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in his attempt to assassinate Louis the Fifteenth; and the Duke d'Aveiro, who equally miscarried in his conspiracy to destroy the late King of Portugal, were unable fully to accomplish their design. But the Polish assassins, after vanquishing every obstacle, and carrying off their prey with unexampled success, liberated him either by their precipitancy, their cowardice, or their repentance. Had he once been brought to the camp of the confederate Generals, there can be no doubt that he would have suffered death: perhaps juridically, like Charles the First of England.

I return to the sequel of the conspiracy. Kosinski, to whom Stanislaus owed his preservation, was a man of mean extraction, born in the Palatinate of Cracow, having assumed the name of Kosinski, which is that of a noble Polish family. By his services in the confederate army, he had risen to the rank of an officer under the command of Pulawski. While the two other associated chiefs remained with him, he continued

unshaken in his purpose ; but from the moment of his being abandoned by them, he began to waver in his determination, and to entertain ideas of preserving the King. The solemn oath which he had taken, and the benediction given to the enterprize by the Nuncio, long operated nevertheless, in sustaining his resolution. Even after he had conducted the King in safety back to Warsaw, he expressed more than once, his doubts of the rectitude of his past conduct, and a degree of concern or repentance for having deceived his employers. He was therefore detained under a very strict guard, and obliged to give evidence against his two companions, Lukawski and Strawenski, who being both taken soon afterwards, were brought prisoners to Warsaw. The former was seized in a cottage, while in bed with his mistress. Both were solemnly tried, and adjudged to die ; but at the King's intercession with the Diet, that Tribunal consented to mitigate the cruel part of the sentence. Instead of inflicting on the two

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chiefs,

chiefs, the variety of tortures which the laws of Poland enact against regicides, they were simply beheaded. Stanislaus equally interposed his interest to save from capital punishment, several of the inferior conspirators. They were only condemned to work during life on the fortifications of Kamienieck in Podolia, where they continue prisoners at this time.

Throughout the whole period of his detention, and on his trial, Lukawski behaved with firmness and composure, never manifesting any symptoms of weakness or pusillanimity. He suffered at the same hour with Strawenski; and Mr. Wroughton, who saw them both die, has assured me, that nothing could exceed the dignity with which the former submitted to his fate. When he was led out to the scaffold, though his body was much extenuated by the severity of his confinement, diet, and treatment; his spirit, unsubdued, raised him above the ignominy of an infamous and public execu-

tion. He had not been permitted to shave his beard while in prison, and his dress corresponded with his figure; but none of these humiliations could depress his mind. With indignation he refused to see or to embrace Kofinski, whom he branded with the appellation of a Traitor. On arriving at the place of punishment, about a mile from Warsaw, he betrayed no unbecoming emotion; and his harangue to the multitude assembled to see him die, breathed the same spirit which animated his life. He expressed neither sorrow nor contrition for his attempt against the King, which he considered rather as meritorious than criminal. His head was severed from his body. Straw-enski displayed equal indifference, and resigned himself in silence to his sentence. Within a few days subsequent to their execution, the King sent away Kofinski into Italy, as his life would probably have been unsafe in Poland, after betraying the cause in which he had engaged. He now resides

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at Senigallia in the papal territories, and enjoys from his Majesty an annual allowance of three hundred ducats.

To the intended assassination of Stanislaus, which was frustrated in so extraordinary a manner, succeeded in the following year, the actual partition of his dominions: an event, the causes, completion, and consequences of which, I have already endeavoured to delineate in a former letter. It was in vain that the unfortunate Prince attempted to protract the dismemberment of the country over which he nominally reigned. His struggles only manifested to all Europe, the helpless condition of the Polish Sovereign and nation. Conscious of the personal dishonour that he must incur, by signing an act which equally degraded both, he long refused to participate in such a proceeding. He even gave the English Minister at Warsaw, the strongest and most solemn assurances, that he would neither be induced by offers, nor compelled by violence, to subscribe so humiliating a renunciation. "I

"present you my hand," said he to Mr. Wroughton, in the agony of his mind; "and I authorise you to inform your Court in my name, that I will rather suffer it to be cut off, than submit to do a deed which must for ever sully my name and reign."

The King's subsequent conduct corresponded ill with his declarations: after reluctantly signing the avowal of the claims set up by the three Powers, he added his consent to the perpetual alienation of the sequestered provinces, from the Crown and Republic of Poland. We must not however, too severely condemn him for his want of resolution, which could only have been ruinous to himself, without producing the smallest benefit to his country. As his refusal would necessarily have cost him the crown to which he had been raised, he had not the magnanimity to renounce it, and to return into a private station, rather than yield to the mandate imposed on him. We might indeed have admired him, if he had preferred the alternative of abdicat-
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ing the throne; but circumstanced as he was, it could scarcely be expected. A sceptre, even when robbed of its brightest ornaments, dignity and independance; is still too intoxicating a possession to be voluntarily relinquished by those, who have been accustomed to the homage which it procures. Stanislaus, it must likewise be remembered, was neither beloved by the majority of his subjects, nor would he have found in their allegiance and affection any steady support. On the other hand, Catharine who had elevated him to the royal dignity, would infallibly have precipitated him from it, if he had refused to comply with her commands. He had in fact no choice except submission; and posterity will incline rather to pity, than to censure him, for the involuntary part which he acted in the dismemberment of his country.

From that period to the present, Poland can scarcely with propriety be said to have any history, or any political existence. Almost without commerce, absolutely without a foreign ally, and destitute of internal

force or revenues adequate to its own emancipation; compressed on all sides by three powerful monarchies, it seems to wait in silent expectation the sentence of its total extinction. The King and the Diet are only empty names: Warsaw is governed by Russian councils, and subjected by Russian troops. Even the provinces are torpid; and the Confederates, who so long endeavoured to avert the destruction of the Republic, have only by their imprudent efforts accelerated its fall. Such is the fate of a country, which under a wise government, might have been justly ranked among the most powerful European States; which in the course of the last century, carried at one time its victorious arms into the heart of Muscovy; and saved Vienna at another, from falling into the hands of the Turks; but, which now only holds out a memorable lesson to the present, as well as to future ages.

The character of Stanislaus is not one of those either hard to penetrate, or difficult to delineate. As a man and an individual, he

he is certainly more amiable, more an object of attachment and respect, than when contemplated in his kingly capacity. His person, from the concurring testimony of all who knew him in his youth, was handsome, graceful, and elegant. Such, Count Poniatowski doubtless appeared in the eyes of Catharine the Second, when he first arrived at Peterburgh. But, the graces of that period of his life are fled; and within the last three or four years he is become too lusty, though it would be unjust to say even now that he is at all corpulent. He is of a middle stature, well proportioned, and of a manly figure. His face is open, pleasing, and interesting; the features bold and strongly marked, particularly his nose and chin. Stanislaus's complexion is pale, and he wears his own hair, which is of a deep colour, approaching to black. There is said to be in his cast of countenance, something pensive and melancholy. At first sight, I confess, this expression did not strike me; but the oftener I have had opportunities of seeing and studying him, the more visible it becomes;

becomes; in profile it is particularly apparent. I believe, however, that it is more the result of his actual situation, his past calamities, and his future prospects, than natural and congenial to him. In fact, whether he casts his view backwards, or directs it forward to the final destiny that awaits him, how vast a train of awful and painful reflection must necessarily open on his mind! I have sometimes seen him stand in a thoughtful attitude, musing, silent, and as I could fancy, occupied in considering his future fate. It is impossible not to feel for him at such moments, a more than common interest.

The King of Poland does not particularly excel in any of the exercises of the body; and though he rides well, he scarcely ever hunts. He still continues to dance the Poloneze national dances, but he has left off every other kind, above two years. In music he has no taste, nor does he possess even a moderate ear. A circumstance more singular is, that he never plays at cards.

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I am assured that neither his Majesty, nor any of the Poniatowski family were ever able to make themselves masters of the common games of cards, so as to attain in them a tolerable degree of perfection. He is a lover and a patron of all the fine arts; but in paintings he has great judgment, and has collected some few valuable pieces of the first masters. No Prince was ever more gracious, easy, and affable in his manners and address; which is the result of natural disposition, not the effect of artifice. His conversation is pleasing, and frequently displays, without the smallest affectation, extensive reading. Few individuals speak so fluently or gracefully the principal European languages. Scarcely any living Sovereign, if we except Joseph the Second, has travelled so much as Stanislaus: those Persons who have known him in the different characters of a private Gentleman and a King, are universally attached to him; and his elevation to a throne has not deprived him
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of the friends, whom he had acquired when Count Poniatowski.

If, after considering him as a man, we view him as a monarch, he appears to sink in our estimation: he is amiable, not great; engaging, but not imposing. Deficient in the strong powers of discernment, as well as in the vigour of mind which his situation demanded, he is not calculated to stem, and still less to direct the storm, by which he has been assailed. He may be said rather to possess a lively and pleasing, than a solid and penetrating understanding. The facility of his nature exposes him to deception; and the flexibility of his temper is abused by favorites, who acquire and retain an ascendancy over him. Adulation under every form, finds too easy an access to his heart; peculiarly when, aided by female attractions, it assumes the mask of affection. The persons who surround him, availing themselves of this foible, frequently obtain by importunity the recompences due only

only to merit. One of his Polish Majesty's weaknesses, which is flattered with the greatest success, is his supposed resemblance in the leading features of his mind and body, to Henry the Fourth of France. The personal similitude is however, much more imaginary than real; but as his forehead, nose, and chin, are all bold and prominent, like those of the King of Navarre, there is a sufficient basis on which for the adulation of courtiers to found a likeness. His gallantries, his affability, his clemency, his ascending from a private station to a throne; and lastly, his having, like Henry, escaped from assassination: all these circumstances are enumerated and insisted on, as striking proofs of a resemblance between the French and the Polish Sovereign. Unfortunately the parallel fails in more essential articles of character; in wisdom, firmness, heroic valor, discernment, and above all in frugality.

It is believed that Stanislaus is by no means deficient in personal courage, though
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he has never seen service, nor can he be supposed to possess the qualifications of a man educated in military habits. He very frequently wears a uniform, and reviews from time to time, like other Princes, his guards and troops. But his talents are more calculated for the calm, than the tempest; for the labour of the cabinet, than the exertions of the field. He passes much of his time, shut up in his apartments, occupied in writing, and engaged in private business of various kinds. To these employments he seems adapted; for he dictates, or composes, not only with ease, but with elegance; and his eloquence, when he harangues, is at once touching, copious, and persuasive. So conscious is Stanislaus of his being unequal to, and unfit for his situation, that he has said to Mr. Wroughton more than once, "Mon ami, je sens que je ne suis pas à ma place: j'aurois dû être Chancelier, et non pas Roi."

The greatest defect of his character, public and private, is the want of economy. His
liberality

liberality of disposition, which degenerates into prodigality, involves him in continual pecuniary difficulties; and though his revenues are ample, he is nevertheless poor. As some compensation for the loss of power, and the diminution of prerogative; the Russians, after the late dismemberment of Poland, increased his private salary from the State. His Majesty's clear annual receipt at this time, does not fall short of two hundred and thirty thousand pounds sterling. All the great officers of the crown are moreover paid, not by him, but by the Republic. Yet, with so princely an income, he has no treasure, no fund for future exigencies; and scarcely can he find wherewithal to maintain his dignity, or to support his household. As there is neither order nor system in his expences, he is devoured by his family, and impoverished by his mistresses and attendants. Count Rzewuski, "Marechal de la Cour," who has the direction of the privy purse, allows the King about eighteen hundred pounds sterling

sterling a month for his ordinary expenditure. This sum, which ought to be adequate to all his wants, is nevertheless insufficient, because it is not managed with prudence, nor superintended by a judicious frugality.

Stanislaus, at every period of his life, has been remarkable for his gallantry, and sensibility to female charms. The graces of his person, which opened him a way to the throne of Poland, rendered him early acceptable to the other sex. They continue to retain too great an ascendant over him, and they have completed the destruction of his finances. He still nourishes the wish to be beloved, and women are not wanting to avail themselves of his weakness. Under professions of disinterested passion, they obtain from him more than they could gain by the sale of their beauty. Yet his Polish Majesty is approaching fast to the age, when men cease to be objects of real attachment, and are usually the dupes of interested love. Perhaps the King does not sufficiently

sufficiently attend to this law of nature, from which he is not more exempt than others.

On the subject of his amours, which have been numerous and almost indiscriminate, I shall say little: for many reasons they are better consigned to oblivion. But Stanislaus, though naturally inconstant and changeable, is yet capable of a lasting passion. After his election to the crown, he became attached to the Princess C——a, one of the most beautiful and accomplished ladies of Poland. Their attachment was so far from being private or mysterious, that on the contrary all Warsaw witnessed it. During a considerable time she reigned in his heart without a rival; till confiding too implicitly in her fondness, he ventured at length to treat her with neglect. Indignant at such usage, in a moment of resentment, when he least expected it, she broke off all connexion with him, and attached herself to Prince Repnin, the Russian ambassador. It was in vain that Stanislaus

attempted to mollify her by submission, or to awaken her former passion: she shut her door against him, refused to admit him to her presence, and would never listen to any overtures of reconciliation. He was inconsolable for a long time, and even abandoned himself when in private, to the most immoderate transports of grief or of dejection.

✧ The King has no natural children avowed as such, nor has he had any, male or female, since his elevation to the throne; but when Count Poniatowski, he had two by a woman of very inferior condition. They are both absolutely disowned, and educated in obscurity. He continues to lead however a life which may be termed libertine and dissolute, more especially at forty-six years of age, when youth can be no longer pleaded in extenuation. Two females divide his time, and occupy his attention, if not his heart at this moment: the first, Madam T——s, an Italian, though now in her wane, is still extremely beautiful. Her figure,

figure, manners, and countenance, all breathe an air of voluptuousness. She reminds me of the Alemas and the Calypsos of fable, as Fenelon and Ariosto have depicted them. The other, the Countess G——a, is more elegant, feminine, and pleasing. I have supped with his Polish Majesty at General Cocceii's, where he was seated between these two female favorites. In return for the favours which they bestow on him, they drain his purse; and contribute neither to render him more respectable, nor probably in fact more happy.

His Polish Majesty has two brothers, and as many sisters alive. Casimir, Prince Poniatowski, the eldest, who is near eleven years older than the King, unfortunately resembles him in the parts of his character, which are by no means models for imitation. His dissipations and his profusions have reduced him to the necessity of alienating the high post of "Great Chamberlain of the Crown," and have rendered him dependant on the King for his principal support.

Prince Poniatowski has one son, named Stanislaus, who is at this time near five-and-twenty; and who at least cannot be accused of following the example either of his father or his uncle: extravagance is by no means his fault, or his characteristic. Should the crown of Poland be continued in the family of Poniatowski, it is on him that the Empress of Russia will probably cause it to devolve, whenever it may become vacant. He certainly entertains hopes, however chimerical, of ascending the throne; and with a view of facilitating so great an object of ambition, he has been not long since, on a visit to the Court of Petersburg. All circumstances considered, it is however very improbable that these visions of royalty will ever be realized, or that the sceptre will be perpetuated in the collateral descendants of the reigning Sovereign.

A dark cloud overspreads the evening of Stanislaus's life and reign: he feels its pressure, and sometimes gives vent to the agitations of his mind, on the tender subject

ject of his future prospects. Many times has he predicted to Mr. Wroughton, that his end will be disastrous and violent. Not long ago, grasping the English Envoy's hand, "Ah, mon ami," said he, "je suis réservé pour des nouveaux et des grands malheurs. Je mourrai comme Charles Premier d'Angleterre." Such predictions, it is evident, are merely the apprehensions of a man, who sees the precarious tenure by which he holds his crown; who is surrounded by enemies domestic as well as foreign; who has escaped by a sort of miracle, from assassination, and who anticipates as certain, dangers which are only contingent. Yet we must confess, that there is too much reason to tremble for the fate of Stanislaus. The tempests which at present seem overblown, will probably wake again, and may finally overturn both the Sovereign and the Republic of Poland. But these speculations would lead me too far, and I shall therefore close my letter.

LETTER XXI.

Decline of the Court of Warsaw since the accession of the present King.—Description of Stanislaus's villa.—General Cocceii.—Prostitution of honors and dignities in Poland.—Venality of the upper ranks.—Libertinism.—Number, facility, and instances of divorces.—Virtues of the Poles.—Female character.—Elegance of dress.—Portrait of a Polish woman of quality.—Heroism of the women.—Military forces.—Environs of Warsaw.—Villanow.—Examination of John Sobieski's reign and character.—Enquiries relative to the "Plica Polonica."—Polish Peasants.—Reflections on the actual condition, and future fate of Poland.

WARSAW, July 26, 1778.

THE Court, as may naturally be supposed, has declined in splendor during the course of the present reign, proportionably with the diminution sustained by Poland in national wealth, greatness, and power.

power. Such a change, even before the partition of 1772, was certain and inevitable. While the Saxon Princes held the sceptre, a vast portion of the revenues of their hereditary dominions, flowed into the country of which they were the elective Sovereigns. Compelled to divide their time between the Polish and the Saxon capitals, all the arts as well as the refinements of Dresden accompanied them when they removed to Warsaw. Mr. Wroughton, who remembers the last years of the period to which I allude, assures me that the number and beauty of the equipages, horses, and train of the great nobility, who usually came to welcome the arrival of Augustus the Third, exceeded description. Prince Radzivil in particular, whose patrimonial estates were then of a magnitude and extent approaching to royal, sometimes united with the elegance of European taste, the barbarous pomp of Sarmatian manners. He once entered Warsaw in his coach, drawn by six white bears caught in his own Lithuanian forests,

forests, harnessed, and broken in for the purpose; but their ferocity and intractability rendered them dangerous to their keepers. I should not venture to relate the fact, if I did not hold it from so high an authority. However extraordinary it may appear, the manners of Poland render it credible.

Stanislaus's drawing-room, or to speak more properly, his levee, though numerously attended, displays no magnificence. He only acts the Sovereign, and performs the part of King in the circle, while Count Stackelberg possesses the effective power, and dispenses all the favors of the Crown. A number of the first nobility still appear at Court in the Polish habit, which gives the crowd a picturesque appearance. In summer the King retires to a little villa or feat, not quite a mile from Warsaw, where he resides in great privacy, rather as a private gentleman than as a crowned head. This retreat, for it is no more, is called "Les Bains," there being in the centre of the building

building a circular bath, covered with a dome. The house, which lies in a deep basin or hollow, surrounded by hills and woods, is very agreeable in warm weather; but the situation renders it unwholesome, as soon as the autumnal rains and damps commence. I have had the honor of dining there with his Majesty in a very small company, of which Mr. Wroughton was one. The youngest of his two sisters, the Countess Branicza; his nephew, Prince Joseph Poniatowski, a youth of fifteen, who is brought up under the King's immediate care; and the Bishop of Plocko, Stanislaus's youngest surviving brother, were present. His Polish Majesty appears to great advantage on such occasions, from which ceremony is banished; and for which he seems more designed by nature, than for public life and situations of difficulty. He allowed me to survey every part of his little mansion. Horace's Sabine farm could scarcely be smaller; but it is voluptuously furnished, and contains some paintings of value.

value. On the table of his cabinet, which is fitted up with decorations and pictures in the Chinese taste, lay spread, a melancholy subject of contemplation. It was a fine map of Poland, on a great scale, recently struck, and in which the *dismembered provinces* are accurately marked, with their *new* appellations. Frederic has denominated his share *La. Prusse Occidentale;* and Maria Theresa has revived the titles of "*Gallicia and Lodomeria,*" which now supersede the ancient geographical names of those portions of Poland. Such a mute, but eloquent companion constantly before his eyes, which reminds him of his departed greatness, cannot tend to enliven the hours of Stanislaus's retirement, or to inspire him with gay ideas.

It is at General Cocceii's that I have seen him more unbent, more convivial, and more apparently cheerful than anywhere else. That veteran officer, equally a man of letters, a soldier, and a polite gentleman, commands a regiment of Polish guards. He is
now

now advancing fast towards old age ; but he is vigorous, communicative, hospitable, and of an excellent society. After having once been the friend of the great Frederic, he is now, in the evening of life, become the companion of Stanislaus ; who, if inferior in talents and strength of genius, is in other points of view far more amiable than the stern philosopher of “ Sans Souci.” Cocceii resides in a sort of suburban villa, just out of Warsaw, where he has frequently the honour of entertaining his Polish Majesty. There, in a select company of both sexes, after supper, and undisturbed by corroding reflections, which as Cervantes well observes, seldom hold much interference at such times ; the King seems to forget at once his past misfortunes, his present depression, and his future prospects. His conversation, manners, and whole deportment, convince me how pleasing he must have been when Count Poniatowski. I am not surprised that Catharine, after admitting him to so distinguished a place in her affections,

tions, elevated him to the throne of Poland; but I fear Stanislaus will have cause to lament, that love and fortune should have conspired to raise him from a private station to royalty. Juvenal's observation, when speaking of the death of Kings, in the tenth satire, continually recurs to my mind, as I reflect on the singular destiny of this amiable Prince.

The general dissolution of morals among the upper orders, is not one of the least extraordinary and characteristic features of the capital and country from which I am writing. Neither Petersburg nor Naples can surpass Warsaw in these respects. All the principles which bind society together, and which purify or perpetuate it, appear to me to be relaxed among the Poles. The army, the court, the church, and every department of private life, are more or less infected. Those institutions, civil and political, which in their very nature should be most free from the contagion, are tainted. Boys who have never seen a camp, nor at-
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tained the slightest degree of professional experience, receive commissions as colonels and generals. The habit of a soldier, which ought to be rigidly confined to such as are in military service, is prostituted; and almost every nobleman at pleasure wears a uniform. The blue riband of the "White Eagle," as well as the red riband of "St. Stanislaus," which latter was instituted by his present Majesty, are so common that scarcely a private gentleman is without one or both of them. Murders and assassinations, in the metropolis as well as in the provinces, are committed with impunity: nor is it safe, even at this season of the year, to walk the streets of Warsaw by night, unaccompanied and unarmed. Not only the want of lamps is favourable to the perpetration of every kind of crime; but what is still worse, the Russians protect for money the most atrocious delinquents.

The prisons throughout the kingdom are crowded with wretched individuals of both
sexes,

sexes, immured, not for transgressions against the law or the state; but the victims of arbitrary power, of violence, and of every kind of oppression. It is here that Mr. Howard will find ample scope and subject for his benevolent enquiries, and active exertions. In no country of Europe is the rage of gaming carried to a more pernicious pitch, or does it produce more destructive consequences. Neither the past devastations of rebellion and war, which have impoverished the nobility; nor the lamentable condition of the Republic itself verging to its total fall, impose a check on the spirit of play. It pervades every company, and seems to acquire force, as the means of supporting it are diminished. The Russian ambassador's Hotel resembles at noon-day, as I have seen, rather a club of gamesters, than the residence of a great public Minister, charged with the administration and government of Poland. Similar scenes are exhibited in the houses of the first nobility, who,

who, after having sold their country, often lose in an evening the fruit of their venality or their dishonor.

If such be the picture of the upper classes, it cannot be supposed that the softer sex is exempt from the vices which distinguish the men. It is not in fact gallantry, but licentiousness, which here reigns without control. The very idea of concealment is derided as unnecessary; and I will venture to assert, that women of the first distinction derive more pride and respect from the rank or qualities of their lovers, than from those of their husbands. Stanislaus's example tends not a little to encourage the depravity of his Court; and during his reign it has attained to a point, unexampled since the time of Augustus the Second; an æra remarkable for the corruption of manners. The presence of a Queen must necessarily have imposed some restraint on the courtiers and ladies about her person; as the absence of such a check, has completed the dissolution of female morals. One of
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the natural consequences, is the facility with which divorces are here obtained; and of course, their frequency. I am almost afraid to relate what I see and know on this point; so incredible may it appear. If infidelity to the nuptial bed was alledged and proved, it might be admitted as a legitimate cause for such separations; but hardly any reasons are usually assigned or required, except mutual incompatibility, dislike, or weariness in the parties. Women of irreproachable manners and conduct, young, beautiful, and highly born, are divorced at the end of three or four years, of a year, nay, of a few months. Should it be requisite to adduce instances in support of this assertion, almost every week offers them here in abundance.

Prince Martin Lubomirski is at present soliciting a divorce from his *second* wife. His *first*, the Countess Haddick, an Austrian by birth, daughter of Marshal Haddick, is now scarcely twenty-eight years of age, uncommonly pleasing in her person, and

and accomplished in her manners. He had no specific cause of dislike to her, nor any crime to lay to her charge: but he had become enamoured of his *present* wife. He is now in turn weary of *her*, and wishes to marry a *third*. There is little or no doubt of his procuring a second divorce, with the same facility that he obtained the first. I went with Mr. Wroughton a few days ago, to visit the Princess Zanguska, at a pleasant retreat on the banks of the Vistula, about half a mile out of town. She is a very elegant woman, not yet twenty-four. We found her in her garden, walking arm in arm with the Grand Chancellor of Poland, her husband the Prince Zanguski, and another lady, under the shade of some lofty trees. They were amicably soliciting a divorce from the head of the law; who here can grant them with nearly the same ease, that the Pope dispenses pardons or indulgences. I understand, the Prince is soon to be married to the very lady with whom he was then walking, in company with his

own wife; and the two ladies live together at this moment in the greatest intimacy. Even the young Countess Po——a, niece to the King, and of unexceptionable conduct, was divorced not long since, after only *four months* marriage. I could enumerate many more examples of the same kind. In any other European country, practices so repugnant to every principle of morals, as well as of policy, would soon be prevented. But in Poland, the restraints of law, as well as the ties of honour and decorum, are exceedingly weakened in their operation.

After having drawn so unpleasing a picture of the vices of the higher orders, it is however, only a piece of justice to mention their good qualities; since, if they cannot be said to outweigh, they form at least some counterpoise in the opposite scale. The Polish men of condition possess a captivating exterior, and nowhere are to be found more accomplished cavaliers. In all the exercises of the body they are expert; but it is on horseback that they peculiarly excel.

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“ *Le Polonais est né à cheval ;*” and they preserve undiminished this original characteristic of their Sarmatian or Scythian origin. I never saw men ride so gracefully, or unite a more martial air, with the elegance and softness of modern manners. In conversation they are full of urbanity, gay, communicative, and well bred. Almost all the young nobility have travelled, particularly into France ; from which country they have brought back the superficial, but modish address, only to be gained at Paris. French is not anywhere spoken more generally or fluently than at Warsaw : for the Poles, like the Russians, have a national facility at acquiring foreign languages. They are magnificent and shewy in their entertainments, with which they contrive to mix all the delicacy of an expensive taste, and a creative fancy. It is to be lamented that a race of men, endowed with such qualities and faculties, should in general be false, inconsistent, fickle, prodigal, and deficient in that judgment, conduct, and consistency

of character, without which all external and ornamental talents are comparatively of no value or importance.

If the *men* excel in personal endowments and accomplishments, the Polish *women* of rank or condition are equally pleasing. The world does not produce females more winning, polished, or calculated to charm in conversation. They have neither the shyness and coldness of the English, nor the reserve and haughtiness of the Austrian women. Ease, joined with grace, and animated by the wish to please, render them infinitely agreeable. In beauty they may dispute the palm with any country; and their attractions are commonly heightened by all the refinements of dress and of coquetry. It is not my intention to apologize for their levity; still less to excuse their libertinism; but those imperfections and faults are probably more the result of situation, than of natural depravity or licentiousness. In a court and capital such as Warsaw, under a Prince such as Stanislaus, it

is not easy to resist the seduction of example, added to the torrent of immorality. The same woman who in Poland is a Messalina, if transported to Vienna or to London, would have given an example of every conjugal virtue. It is society, religion, morals, and laws, which model individuals, and call into action every thing valuable in our nature. Here, all that I see, announces not less the internal dissolution, than the external destruction of Poland.

The elegance and variety of the ornaments of the toilet are no where better understood, or more successfully practised, than in this capital; where the ladies affect to disdain the formal restraints imposed by custom in other courts. I have seen the same women habited in the dresses of different nations and different centuries; a circumstance that seems to excite no astonishment here. There is something Asiatic in the style of female attire, which reminds me of Greek or Turkish, more than of French or German modes. In a country

which frontiers on Moldavia and the Ukraine, such a departure, or rather emancipation, from the "costume" of Paris, does not, and ought not to surprise. I dined the day before yesterday, with the Princess Z——a, at her villa near the Vistula, accompanied by Mr. Wroughton. The weather being insupportably warm, we passed the whole afternoon in her garden, under the spreading shade of some large elms, not far from the bank of the river. I had then an opportunity of attentively considering her dress, which I will endeavour to describe. Whatever inability the attempt may discover, it will convey to you an idea of the toilet of a Polish woman of quality, who adds to the advantages of birth and fortune, the additional attractions of youth and beauty.

Her head-dress had no resemblance to any thing beheld in other parts of Europe; for she neither wore powder, nor was her hair frizzed, but on the contrary, simply combed down over her forehead, and bound
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by a muslin fillet. Two tresses twisted, which fell from the left side, were negligently pinned to a sort of turban, composed likewise of muslin, that encircled her head. Her robe was of a pale rose color, bordered by a rich embroidery, and descending to her feet, but without concealing them. About her waist was fastened a girdle or cestus of silk, near nine inches in breadth. It is exactly the zone of the Greeks and of Homer, which is still worn in Walachia. A broad Medicis of Dresden lace surrounded her bosom and shoulders, which were partly uncovered, partly veiled by her shift and a Turkish gauze, calculated rather to display, than to hide, those parts of her person. Over her whole figure was diffused a voluptuous air, which added to the effect of her natural attractions. She shewed us her maids, who had just returned from bathing; young Poloneze girls, rising in stature one above the other, and resembling nymphs, in loose drapery, with their wet hair floating down their backs. The Princess herself,

like Lady Wortley Montague's Fatima, is a native of Kaminiecz on the borders of Moldavia; and when a child, had, as she told me, frequently been carried by her mother into the Harem of the Bashaw of Choczim, capital of that Turkish province. I have found her conversation on every subject, not less interesting than her figure; and I regret that my approaching departure from Warsaw, will so soon interrupt our acquaintance.

It is not merely in the intercourse of private life, in the graces of personal deportment, or in the ornaments of female cultivation, that the Polish women excel. They have in a variety of instances, displayed masculine firmness and courage above their sex; peculiarly during the period when their country was the scene of civil dissention, and of foreign war. I could cite some examples of this assertion, not unworthy to be compared with the greatest models of antiquity in heroism. At the action of Slonim in Lithuania, fought by
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Prince Radzivil against the forces of Catherine the Second, in the autumn of 1764, two ladies of the highest rank appeared in the field. The one was sister to Prince Radzivil, the other was his wife. The latter scarcely seventeen years of age, and newly married, fought in person on horseback. With a pistol in her hand, she rode along the line, encouraging the troops to do their duty; and when the Russians obtained the victory, she saved herself by swimming her horse across the river Niemen. This Camilla only wanted a Virgil, to celebrate her courage. She was by birth a Countess Rzewuski, and is still alive, confined in a lonely castle in Lithuania, where, as I am told, she is disordered in her understanding. Her sister-in-law is likewise living, and resident in Poland. The fact itself, which is incontestibly true, makes one of the many tending to prove how widely different are the spirit and manners of this country, from those of our own.

It was not in valour, in patriotism, or in military enthusiasm, that the Polish confederates

derates were deficient; but they wanted system, subordination, obedience, and discipline. They will be, I fear, for ever destitute of those essential qualities, which the Russians know how to value, and to which they owe their actual superiority. The Republic has at this time an army on foot, in regular pay, of about sixteen thousand foldiers; while half that number of Catharine's troops retain Poland in complete subjection. The Muscovite forces, quartered in and near the metropolis, do not exceed nine hundred. It is not a little wonderful to behold a country thus subdued by foreign violence, dismembered, and apparently near its dissolution; while at the same time, the capital seems immersed in pleasures, or sunk in apathy and indifference. Such a nation cannot hope to revive, and scarcely excites our compassion at its fall.

During my stay here, at this beautiful season, I have visited the environs of Warsaw on every side, with the advantage of Mr. Wroughton for my conductor. They are in general tame, flat, and devoid of picturesque

picturesque or pleasing objects. No mountains, and scarcely even any eminences are seen. Through the midst of the solitary landscape rolls the Vistula; but far inferior in grandeur as well as in beauty to the Rhine, the Danube, or the Elbe. In some parts it is divided by small islands; in others it flows in a collected stream, but discoloured, and in many places shallow. The soil, though not unfertile, is very sandy. Hardly any marks of the vicinity of a metropolis present themselves; and so thin is the population that at a mile from the city, a stranger would imagine himself in an uninhabited wild. There are nevertheless, many very elegant palaces or country-houses in its neighbourhood. Among the chief, must be accounted the rival villas of Monkotow and Powonski, which belong to the two Princesses of Lubomirska and Czartoriska, the Statira and Roxana of Poland, who long contended for superiority in the heart of Stanislaus. I was however more
pleased

pleased to visit Villanow, the favourite residence of the great John Sobieski, in which he breathed his last. It is built in a plain, about two leagues from Warsaw, near a branch of the Vistula. The architecture is elegant and grand, having been constructed by an Italian under Sobieski's reign; and as it now belongs to Prince Czartoriski, it is still in perfect preservation. I was particularly delighted with the gardens, which, though laid out in the antique taste of the last century, are very princely, full of large and venerable trees that shed a gloom over the walks.

A circumstance which has surprised me, is not to find among the Poles, the enthusiastic attachment or veneration for the memory and character of John Sobieski, which I had expected. Perhaps, however, on a fair examination, his countrymen may be competent to form a much juster estimate of his merit as a King, and particularly as a King of Poland, than can be done by strangers.

strangers. They assert that his government was stained with notorious defects, or rather vices ; among which his avarice and rapacity were such, that he was compared by them in these particulars to Vespasian. His uxoriousness became, towards the close of his reign, the subject of many satirical writings and ludicrous caricatures. Nor did the qualities of his French Queen, Mary de la Grange d'Arquien, whose violence and intemperance of conduct were ruinous to her eldest son, justify such a partiality for her, or subservience in the King her husband. They moreover accuse him of having always sacrificed the true and palpable interests of his subjects, to those of his family ; whose future elevation to the throne he preferred above every other consideration ; and which he endeavoured to effect by methods repugnant to the laws, or subversive of the constitution, of the Polish Republic.

Even the most brilliant action of his reign, which while it elevated his character among his contemporaries, has peculiarly endeared

endeared him to posterity ; I mean the succour that he gave in person to the Emperor Leopold, when Vienna was besieged by Cara Mustapha in 1683, is arraigned with severity by the Poles. They admit indeed, that his march to the banks of the Danube, was beneficial to the house of Austria ; but they maintain that the act was impolitic in itself, and manifestly injurious to Poland. “ The Turks,” say they, “ were obviously
“ at that time, as they still continue to be,
“ declining in political power : had they
“ even rendered themselves masters of
“ Vienna, they must soon have evacuated
“ it, and could never have maintained a
“ permanent footing in Germany. Sobieski
“ injudiciously precipitated the decline and
“ fall of the Ottoman Empire, by afterwards expelling the Turks from Hungary ;
“ while at the same time he laid the foundations of the Austrian greatness, by going
“ to the Emperor’s relief. The Austrian
“ Princes were much more formidable enemies than the Sultans ; and we have seen
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“ the grand-daughter of Leopold, by an
“ act of signal ingratitude, as well as folly,
“ scarcely ninety years afterwards, join
“ with Prussia and Russia to dismember
“ Poland. It is to John Sobieski therefore
“ that we trace, and in some measure justly
“ impute, our actual state of ruin and de-
“ gradation. He acted no less contrary
“ to the interests of his own family, when
“ towards the end of his life he entered
“ into the closest connexions with Leopold,
“ by marrying his eldest son Prince James
“ to the Empress’s sister. The indignation
“ and apprehensions of his subjects, alarmed
“ at such an alliance with a foreign sovereign,
“ induced them to refuse to perpetuate the
“ Crown in Sobieski’s line. In our esti-
“ mate he neither merits the love of his
“ country, nor the admiration of foreign
“ nations.”

It cannot be denied that there is some validity, as well as truth, in these accusations, of which I was not fully aware, till after conversing with the Poles themselves.

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We must nevertheless oppose to them the glorious victory of Choczim, gained by Sobieski over the Turks; which like that of Theseus over the Minotaur, extricated his country from a deplorable state of humiliation, and freed them from an ignominious tribute to the Porte. Sobieski's march to the relief of Vienna, is not to be tried by the principles of ordinary policy, and still less by its effects at the distance of near a century. In snatching the capital and dominions of Leopold from the hands of Mahometans, he appeared as the champion of civilization, of Christianity, and of Europe. In that character we venerate and admire him, without considering whether he sufficiently attended to the remote interests of his Polish subjects. Nor ought we to forget his valour, his clemency, and the many great qualities that met in his composition. At no period of time, since the extinction of the house of Jagellon, has Poland enjoyed so high a national consideration as under his reign. In how distinguished a
light

light he appeared to foreign Princes, his contemporaries; we may judge by the behaviour of Charles the Twelfth; whose admiration for him was such, that from that principle he would have raised to the throne one of Sobieski's sons, in preference to every other candidate, if he had not been prevented by insuperable obstacles. Touched with enthusiasm, he is said to have wept as he stood over Sobieski's tomb at Cracow, and to have exclaimed, "So great a King ought never to have died!" These facts and reflections, if they cannot altogether obliterate his defects, must always incline us to regard him as one of the most illustrious Princes of the last, or of the present age.

During my stay here I have made many inquiries relative to the "Plica Polonica," a distemper not only extraordinary in itself, but asserted to be peculiar to this country; and almost, if not absolutely irremediable. It is, I believe, unnecessary to add that the seat of the disorder is in the hair, which

entangles, and by degrees forms into a solid mass resembling a mat; every separate hair becoming a blood-vessel, or tube of putrid matter. I have seen them stand out from the head, or hang in ropes from it; and nothing can be more loathsome, as well as disgusting. All attempts to shave the part, or to cut the hair, in however early a stage of the disease such operations are tried, produce either blindness, or maladies still more fatal; at least I am so assured by every body with whom I have conversed on the subject.

Upon the physical causes of the "Plica," I find very different opinions. Many persons assert that it arises from some morbid, though hitherto unascertained qualities of the air, or water in Poland. It is certain that the latter element is, generally speaking, bad, stagnant, and corrupt. But so it is likewise in many other countries of Europe and Asia, where the "Plica" is unknown. On the whole, a more general, as well as rational belief is, that its rise and progress

progress are owing only to the horrid nutriment, and inconceivable filth of the Polish common people. In these particulars they are far worse than the Swedes, Russians, or Hungarians. The distemper is almost exclusively found among the lowest class; labourers, peasants, and mendicants. It is besides, much more frequent in the remote provinces, than in the metropolis, or its vicinity. At Cracow, during the few days of my stay there, I saw many more persons affected with it in a greater or smaller degree, than I have remarked in the course of near eight weeks residence at Warsaw. Dirt, misery, and neglect, seem to be the only, or principal causes of this tremendous scourge; which in a well administered country, where the cleanliness, comfort, and felicity of the inferior orders were objects of legislative attention, might probably soon be extirpated, or easily cured.

The condition of the Polish peasants is unquestionably very calamitous: yet, many intelligent, humane, and impartial persons with whom I have conversed here, assure

me, that it is not in fact so deplorable as we are led to conceive from appearances. They constitute indeed a part of the estate, as in Russia, and are sold or transferred with the land. But this humiliating servitude is accompanied with some circumstances, which counterbalance, or at least mitigate their lot. Every peasant, even the meanest, is provided by his lord with two oxen, two horses, and a cottage. In case of fire, the house is rebuilt; and if they die, the beasts are replaced by their owner. A certain fixed portion of their time and labour is appropriated to their Lords, and the remainder they are at liberty to convert to their own profit or purposes. The number of days destined for their masters, varies in different provinces, and on different estates. But in none is the proportion so severe or exorbitant, as not to leave them time sufficient to cultivate their own little land. In some parts of Poland, the peasants often become rich, or at least perfectly easy in their circumstances. Their poverty and wretchedness are not therefore, say these persons,

persons, the inevitable and necessary result of their condition. It arises more from their national and characteristic indolence, drunkenness, and want of industry or exertion. Such are the arguments and objections which are here advanced. Admitting however all their force, they only prove how insufficient is every private or partial emancipation, in order to raise a half-armed man, unless accompanied with the mild blessing of civil and political liberty. While the Polish people are altogether strangers to this distinction, they can never rise to their proper rank in society, nor be justly accounted other than slaves.

I am now about to set out for Königsberg, and if I were only to consider Warsaw as a capital, independent of any moral or political circumstances connected with it, I should pronounce it an agreeable place of residence. Its dissimilitude to other great cities, ordinarily visited, and its remote position on the eastern frontier of Europe, render it peculiarly an object of curiosity. In all the amusements of a me-

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tropolis,

tropolis, in gaiety, pleasures, and the charms of elegant society; it is superior in my estimation to Berlin, to Stockholm, or to Copenhagen. But no portion of apathy or indifference; can enable me to shut my eyes on the deplorable condition of Poland, or even to forget its actual situation. "Homo sum, humani generis alicuius pars." He who can do otherwise, must have lost all feelings of private compassion, all sense of national honour, education, and independence. The King, however, considerate of his private character, is only a victim of fate; reserved in all probability for new calamities; who seems desirous in the enjoyment of the present hour, to bury the recollection of past misfortunes, as well as the prospect of future evils. Powerless and unsupported, he appears to resign himself to his fate; and after the convulsions which he has witnessed, to allow himself to be borne down the stream of events, without farther effort for his preservation or extrication. The nobility, thinned by years of civil war, plundered, and degraded, yet
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sunk in dissipation, or sold to foreign powers; excite only sentiments of concern, blended with contempt. The inferior orders are hardly objects of pity: oppressed, enslaved, and strangers to the enlightened love of their country, which we denominate patriotism, they can suffer little by a change of masters: except in the suppression of a name, they will undergo no material alteration. In some sense their condition will even be ameliorated; since, whatever personal or domestic grievances they may have to support, under their new Sovereigns, they will at least be protected against foreign depredation or invasion.

These are the melancholy reflections which the present state of Poland necessarily excites. Its dismemberment can only be considered as the prelude to its total dissolution; but time alone can ascertain when, and in what manner, so great an event will be accomplished. My next letter will probably be dated from Dantzic or Thorn.

LETTER XXII.

Journey from Warsaw to Königsberg.—Comparison of Königsberg and Berlin.—State of Dantzic.—Description of Thorn.—Particulars respecting Copernicus.—Journey from Thorn to Breslaw.—Remarks on that city, and on Silesia.

BRESLAW, September 15, 1778.
AFTER a stay of near two months at Warsaw, I left it on the 28th of July for Königsberg; but as no posts are established through that part of Poland, it was requisite to hire seven horses to conduct us to Willenberg, the first Prussian town, all of which were drove and managed by a single postilion. I quitted Warsaw with a mixture of pleasure and of regret. Its society and amusements might agreeably detain a stranger, if their inap-
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tion were not counteracted, and in a great measure effaced, by the national misery and degradation to which (not is hourly a witness. It characterizes every thing in Poland, I and pursued me to the frontier. On the evening of my departure (from Warsaw) at only a few leagues distant, I day down, more from necessity than choice, in a wretched house inhabited by Jews. There I passed the night, stretched on dirty straw among ducks, pigs, Poles, and Jewesses; devoured by vermin, and unable to sleep on account of the heat, as well as the smell which annoyed me, do not think I can now say I reached the borders of Prussia on the following day, and arrived at Königsberg after a tedious, as well as fatiguing journey on the first of August. The accommodations in the inns, or post-houses, were nearly similar to those of Poland. But in all respects else, the transition from one country to the other is a pleasing one, and cannot fail to strike the most careless observer. If Frederic oppresses and impoverishes, he at least

least extends protection to his subjects, and allows no inferior tyrants to plunder them. In Poland, the impotence of the government, and the unrestrained privileges of the nobility, spread universal ruin. I was surprised at the fertility, cultivation, and population of the greater part of the territories of his Russian Majesty through which I passed. At the beginning of the present century, Prussia was almost a desert, ravaged by the plague, and nearly without inhabitants. Frederic William, the late King, however severe and almost ferocious he was in his private character, yet, with a policy equally enlightened and humane, increased the prosperity by remitting the taxes, and by timely donations of money to the people. His son, the great Frederic, though endowed with a mind more enlarged, and with views in many respects more elevated, has not followed the example. During the whole course of his reign, it is certain that he has manifested a dislike for this part of his dominions, which he never deigns to visit

visit in person, and towards which he even expresses a sort of alienation. While he never fails annually to inspect Silesia, and the newly acquired provinces on either side of the Vistula, he disdainfully averts his eyes from the kingdom and people of Prussia. They feel as subjects and as such, this partiality. More than twenty years have elapsed, since he last honoured them by his presence.

Königsberg, like Moscow and Prague, is only a capital in name, not the residence of a Court. It possesses nevertheless many points of superiority above Berlin or Potsdam, neither of which cities can compare with it in the advantages of soil and local position. The river Pregel, upon which Königsberg is built, exceeds in magnitude the Havel and the Spree, as much as the surrounding country excels in beauty and fertility the barren sands of Brandenburg. By the Pregel, Königsberg communicates, at a few miles below the city, with the Baltic; and its vicinity to the Russian provinces,

vinces, particularly Livonia, enables it to maintain the closest relations, either hostile or amicable, with Petersburg. Behind it lie the northern provinces of Poland, many of whose most valuable productions are exported from Königsberg, Berlin, as well as Potsdam, but the contrary, are destitute of commerce and derive their principal support from the presence of the Sovereign. It must however be admitted, that these disadvantages are in some measure compensated by the central situation of the present capital. The Prussian dominions extend irregularly, with some intervals, from the Rhine and the German ocean on the west to the frontiers of Courland and Lithuania. Berlin is likewise undoubtedly better calculated for keeping up a prompt communication with the Courts of London, Paris, and the Hague; as well as for watching every movement of the Cabinet of Vienna, and rendering timely protection or assistance to the members of the Germanic System. We may therefore consider it as highly improvable,

happens, that the seat of government will ever be transferred from Brandenburg to Prussia.

Continuing my journey through Elbing and Marienburg, I arrived at Dantzic, where I found my friend Mr. Wroughton, who after a residence of near seventeen years at Warlaw, was about to embark for Stockholm, being sent as Minister at that Court. His parting interview with Stanislaus was not unaccompanied with tears on both sides, and with the most melancholy presages of impending futurity. They are but too well justified by the position and prospects of that unfortunate Prince. Dantzic, situated near the mouth of the Vistula, in the most delicious country, and in the happiest position for trade, excites at present only sensations of concern and commiseration. It is evidently much declined in population, industry, and riches, since I last visited it, only four years ago. Frederic holds it closely invested, though without the ostensible appearance of hostility; and there can be little

little question, that the blockade will finally compel the inhabitants to surrender on terms, if not at discretion. They still indeed, nourish hopes of interposition from Catharine, who naturally cannot see without jealousy, such an addition made to the political and commercial power of the King of Prussia. But he has always found means, either by terror or by conciliation, to mollify, and even to disarm the Court of Peterburgh. Master of the Vistula, above and below the city of Dantzic; possessed of the suburbs; and gently, but systematically coercing the place, he has already destroyed its commerce in a great degree. The period of its political extinction may, like that of Poland, be hastened or protracted from many causes: but I should incline to suppose, that it cannot be very distant. There is no object of acquisition or aggrandizement, upon which Frederic has kept his eye more invariably fixed; and there are few within his grasp, which will, when accomplished, contribute more to increase his
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importance in the scale of the Baltic and European powers.

In my journey from Dantzic to Thorn, where I arrived on the 5th of this month, I had an opportunity of viewing the rich and valuable tract of country, which Frederic has acquired by the partition of Poland. It extends chiefly along the banks of the Vistula, almost from the gates of one city, to those of the other; and no portion of the north of Europe, Livonia not excepted, is superior to it in fertility of soil. Nearly at the southern termination stands Thorn, as Dantzic is placed at the other extremity to the north. Both Cities have been hitherto spared by his Prussian Majesty; but it is only a respite, the result of policy, not of moderation. Thorn, which was founded by the Teutonic knights in the thirteenth century, long continued free, under the *protection*, not the dominion, of Poland. It divided with Dantzic the trade of all the interior provinces of that country; and was, during the flourishing periods

riety of its government, so rich as well as powerful, that the city maintained a body of three thousand regular troops in constant pay. At present, the military force is dwindled to a hundred soldiers. Forty Russians, commanded by an ensign, have likewise been recently admitted into the place; chiefly with a view of preventing the Prussians from making any attack by open violence. Frederic will however probably attain, by more indirect and artful gradations, the object of his ambition. He knows how to reduce the city, without employing artillery, or the formality of a siege. He has already seized on the territory of Thorn, straitened the access to it, and effectually confiscated their revenues, by erecting custom-houses on the Vistula, which levy exorbitant duties on every article of importation or exportation. In fact, depopulation and decay are visible in every street. Since 1773 the inhabitants have diminished a third part, from fifteen to ten thousand; and they are still annually decreasing. Extraneous postulations

postulations and reclamations are vain against force. While England, Holland, and Russia are passive, Poland cannot protect itself. In a few years, according to all appearance, Thorn will be swallowed up in the Prussian Monarchy.

Whatever may be its political fate, the name of Thorn will always recall to the mind a man, whose deep researches ascertained the principle, only surmised by antiquity, upon which rests the Newtonian system of philosophy. Nicholas Copernicus, or Kopernic, has immortalized the place of his birth and residence. Every particular relative to him excites curiosity; and after visiting his house, as well as his tomb, I endeavoured to obtain some information concerning his family. It is not a little remarkable, that so sublime a discovery should have originated in a part of Europe the most obscure, and hardly civilized; while it escaped the finer genius of Italy, and of France. Though a part of the building

has been destroyed by fire, the chamber is still religiously preserved, in which Copernicus was born. His remains are buried under a flat stone, in one of the side aisles of the most ancient church of Thorn. Above, is erected a small monument, on which is painted a half-length portrait of him. The face is that of a man declined in years, pale and thin; but there is in the expression of the countenance, something which pleases, and conveys the idea of intelligence. His hair and eyes are black, his hands joined in prayer, and he is habited in the dress of a priest. Before him is a crucifix, at his foot a skull, and behind appear a globe and compass. He died in 1543; and when expiring, is said to have confessed himself, as long and uniform tradition reports, in the following Latin verses, which are inscribed on the monument. They demonstrate that when near his dissolution, all cares or inquiries, except those of a religious nature, had ceased to affect or to agitate him.

“ Non

" Non parem Pauli gratiam requiro,
 " Veniam Petri neque posco; sed quam
 " In crucis ligno dederat latroni,
 " Sedulus oro."

Monsieur Luther de Geret, counsellor of
 the senate of Thorn, furnished me with
 some information relative to the illustrious
 person in question; and as so little is
 ascertained of his origin or family, it
 merits to be preserved. " The father of
 " Kopernic was a stranger, from what part
 " of Europe is totally unknown. He
 " settled here as a merchant, and the ar-
 " chives of the city prove that he obtained
 " the freedom of Thorn in 1462. It seems
 " clear that he must have been in opulent
 " circumstances, and of consideration; not
 " only from the liberal education which he
 " bestowed upon his son, but from the rank
 " of his wife. She was sister of Luca Wat-
 " zekrode, bishop of Ermeland, a prelate
 " descended from one of the most illustrious
 " families of Polish Prussia. The name of
 " the father, as well as of the son, was
 " Nicholas.

“ Nicholas. To the patronage of his ma-
“ ternal uncle, the great Copernicus was
“ indebted for his ecclesiastical promotions;
“ being made a prebend of the church of
“ St. John at Thorn, and a canon of the
“ church of Frawemberg in the diocese of
“ Ermeland. Of his private life we know
“ little. He did not reside here altogether,
“ nor did he die here; his body having been
“ brought to Thorn for sepulture from
“ Ermeland, where he expired. A dysen-
“ tery, accompanied with a partial palsy,
“ produced his death. In his character, as
“ well as in all his deportment, he was mo-
“ dest, diffident, and religious. It is not
“ either known or believed that he left
“ behind him any natural children. But
“ the family continued to reside here, as
“ appears by a manuscript chronicle still
“ existing, in which it is mentioned, that
“ ‘ On the 11th of August 1601, died Mar-
“ tin Kopernic, barber, of the kindred and
“ posterity of Nicholas Kopernic; a young
“ man, unmarried and wealthy, of an apo-
“ plectic

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“plectic fit, at his garden in the suburbs.”
“In his person we apprehend the name to
“have become totally extinct.”

The Vistula opposite to Thorn, is broad, and across it extends a bridge, over which I passed on my journey to this city. All Europe, I believe, cannot produce such another, it being composed entirely of loose planks placed on wooded piles or pillars, at a considerable height above the water. There is no sort of railing or fence on either side; and though exceedingly long, it is so narrow that two carriages cannot possibly pass in any part. So loose indeed are the boards, and so frail is its construction, that it is impossible to drive over it without shuddering. Our first day's journey from Thorn, lay through the newly acquired dominions of his Prussian Majesty, which, previous to the partition of Poland, constituted part of the province of Cujavia. But, so unascertained are the limits of these recently sequestered territories, and so desirous is Frederic of extending and enlarg-

ing them, that it is difficult, if not impossible, to know what are their boundaries. His troops have either advanced or receded, during the last six years, as the reclamations of the Court of Peterburgh have been strong or gentle. I passed through various villages which had been occupied by the Prussians, and afterwards restored to Poland. But the fate of that unhappy country is not yet finally decided.

Entering next day the Palatinate of Gnesna, which is still avowedly subject to Stanislaus, we reached a town called Chercova, towards evening, where with the utmost difficulty I procured a miserable room and bed. No posts being here established, we were obliged to hire six very indifferent horses belonging to Jews, conducted by two Poles, who more resembled savages than postilions, in their attire. The morning was very rainy, and we had scarcely advanced a league from Chercova, when, in crossing a bridge composed of loose planks, like that of Thorn, the drivers not having

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exactly taken the middle, the boards tilted up, and precipitated us into the stream. It was fortunately rather a torrent than a river, and as the distance was neither considerable, nor the depth great, we soon made our escape out of the carriage. The glasses and one of the wheels were broken by the violence of the fall; nor was it till after a considerable time, that with the assistance of several peasants, the chaise was again raised up, and we proceeded slowly towards the next town. But the horses having tired in the midst of a wood, where the sand reached nearly to the axle-trees, after many ineffectual efforts, it became necessary to send a servant for assistance. He returned in an hour, bringing fresh horses, which drew us to Jaroczin, where we dried ourselves, and found some refreshment at an inn kept by Jews; a race of people to whom, notwithstanding their extortion, travellers are under the greatest obligation, while passing through this inhospitable portion of Europe. At Cojmin, the town in which we remained

during the night, neither furniture, beds, nor provisions were to be procured in the inn, if such it could properly be called; and we were glad to lie down on the floor, littered with clean straw.

Having reached the Silesian frontiers, on the ensuing morning, we gladly quitted Poland; a country in which it is difficult to imagine, or to exaggerate, the extent as well as variety of human wretchedness! Breslaw is a fine city, hardly inferior in population to Warsaw; and if we except the palaces which are to be found in the Polish capital, far superior to it in regularity, beauty, and the marks of opulence or civilization. Frederic, who knows its importance, has adopted every art in order to engage the affections of the inhabitants; and to obliterate, or insensibly efface, their ancient predilection in favor of the House of Austria. He never fails to visit them annually, distributes favors among them, and has constructed cazernes, with a view to relieve the citizens from the inconvenience

ence of lodging his soldiery. But it is on the tenure of arms, that he refts his beft hopes of the fecurity and prefervation of Silefia. In time of peace, a garrifon of eight battalions is ufually maintained in Breflaw. At prefent, when he is engaged in perfon at the head of his forces in Bohemia, he has left only about four thoufand men in this city; an evident proof how little apprehenfion he entertains that the Auftrians will attempt to inveft it, or that they can undertake to reconquer Silefia. I am juft returned from looking at the fpot rendered memorable by the battle of Breflaw, in November 1757, which was fought partly in a plain without the place, and partly in the fuburbs of St. Nicholas. Indeed, the whole furrounding country has been fertilized with human blood, in the courfe of the conteft between Auftria and Pruffia, for this valuable and extenfive province.

To-morrow I fet out for Dresden,

LETTER XXII.

*Aspect of Dresden, and security of that capital.
 —Benefits resulting to Saxony from the Prussian alliance.—Journey from Breslaw to Dresden.—Examination of the campaign of 1778.
 —Justification of the King of Prussia's military plan.—Anecdotes of that Monarch.—His retreat to Schatzlar.—Entrance of Prince Henry into Bohemia.—He retires into Saxony.
 —State of the Prince and his army, at the close of the campaign.*

DRESDEN, October 8, 1778;

IT is scarcely possible to recognize this city, which I quitted last November, or to conceive the change produced in it by a few months. Dresden then enjoyed profound tranquility; and the inhabitants, engaged in all the amusements or occupations of Peace, looked forward to the probable

bable continuance of a long repose. Now, every thing announces war, and the place is converted into a garrison. Nothing can be more striking than the transition; nothing more animating than the scene. Prussian hussars and Saxon Cuirassiers, mixed with cavalry, infantry, and dragoons, crowd the streets. The inns and private houses are filled with prisoners and hostages, mostly from Bohemia, who occupy the apartments to the very roof. Even the ladies talk only of war, and discuss or criticise the military operations of the campaign, with no small ability.

If we except, however, the general fermentation produced by so great and unexpected an event, together with some augmentation of the public expence, necessarily resulting from an increased military establishment; Dresden has not hitherto experienced any of the calamities usually attendant on, or characteristic of war. The Elector goes out to hunt, as usual, at Moritzburg; parties of pleasure are made at several

several leagues distant, without the slightest apprehension of danger from the Austrians ; and all the environs of the capital are protected from insult or devastation. A small party of Croats, who swam across the Elbe above the city, some days ago, and who as hastily repassed the river again into Bohemia, are the only enemies that have yet appeared. If so extraordinary a degree of protection and security, at a moment like the present, does not prove, as it would seem to do, the wisdom of the Government ; it certainly demonstrates the superior advantage resulting to Saxony from an alliance with Prussia, rather than with Austria. Only twenty-two years ago, at the commencement of the great war of 1756, before hostilities began, all Saxony was over-run by Frederic's troops. The electorate was ravaged, the capital bombarded and plundered, the King of Poland driven from his hereditary dominions to take refuge at Warsaw, and his army ignominiously made prisoners of war at Pirna ; while the
imperial

imperial forces were reduced to be spectators of these disasters, which they could neither prevent nor revenge.

At present, the same Prince who formerly humbled and cannonaded Dresden, extends to it complete protection. The gates are confided to Prussian troops; the money of Brandenburg is current in all payments or contracts; and the most perfect cordiality subsists between the two sovereigns, as well, as between their respective subjects. The name of Frederic, so long held in execration throughout this country, which bled under his oppression, is now pronounced with veneration. They seem only to remember his valor, skill, and military reputation. All the animosities of former reigns are now done away by present necessity; and at a time when the campaign is rapidly drawing to a close, only a few predatory incursions have disturbed the interior tranquillity of Saxony.

- So inestimable an advantage is not however to be wholly ascribed either to the superior

perior activity and energy of Frederic; or still less to any incapacity, tardiness, or inferior military ability in the Austrian commanders. It results in a great degree from the nature of the country itself, and the local position of Dresden in particular. Though this capital is situated within a very few leagues of the Bohemian frontiers, yet as Saxony is bounded by mountains and defiles towards Bohemia, the approaches are difficult, hazardous, and either impeded by snows during many months of the year, or easily defended against an invader. On the contrary, notwithstanding the portion of territory by which Berlin and Dresden are separated, exceeds a hundred miles in extent; the intermediate country is almost all flat, open, and indefensible, except by a superior army, at the risk of a general engagement. Happily therefore for Saxony, policy and interest have dictated at the present moment, a close alliance with Prussia; whose Sovereign now appears as the champion of the Germanic system and liberties
against

against Austrian innovation; while he is the peculiar advocate of Saxony, the Electress Dowager being sister and allodial heiress to the late Elector of Bavaria. We may however venture safely to assert, that while the present political order of things, and the present balance of power remain unchanged in Germany; no advantages which the court of Vienna can hold out or offer to Saxony, will ever compensate for the misfortunes almost necessarily resulting from a rupture with Prussia. This is a truth of which the present wise Elector, instructed by his grand-father's experience and calamities, seems to have the fullest conviction.

I arrived here on the 19th of last month, after crossing a fine part of Silesia, and the whole Province of Lusatia, which latter country belongs to Saxony, and is in every respect one of the most beautiful of the German Empire. They derive additional charms, from the contrast which every village and every cottage present to those of Poland. At Parchwitz, a little town in
Silesia,

Silesia, we were only about twelve leagues from the great Prussian army, under the King's command, in Bohemia : but Frederic neither permits visitors, nor accepts volunteers. The English are particularly obnoxious to him ; and it is certain that he has never sincerely loved the nation, at any period of his reign, however policy or necessity may have driven him, under peculiar circumstances, to form alliances with Great Britain. He has not forgotten the unpaid subsidy of 1762 ; and he deprecates, not without some reason, the animadversions or criticisms which foreigners of our description, might presume to pass upon his military plans and conduct. “ Je ne veux pas “ de chambre basse au milieu de mon armée,” said he, in reply to an application made him lately, to permit some English officers to serve as volunteers in his camp. Perhaps, if we rightly consider the matter, he cannot justly be blamed for his determination on this point.

Silesia and Lusatia are classic ground in
modern

modern history, and may not improbably form the scene of some future epic poem, of which Frederic will be the hero, and his victories or dangers the principal subject. It is impossible not to have him constantly present to the mind and imagination, while travelling from Breslaw to Dresden. As well might we visit the Troade, without recalling Hector or Achilles, at every step. We drove across the plain of Lissa, where he completely defeated the Austrians under Prince Charles of Lorraine, in December 1757; and over that of Lignitz, where he extricated himself at one of the most perilous moments of the last war, in August 1760. Surrounded by three great armies, and apparently on the very point of extinction, it was only by routing Laudohn, that he there preserved his crown and life. At the end of twenty years, it is curious to behold him and his brother Henry, again opposed almost on the same ground, to the same Generals, Lacy and Laudohn. Near Bautzen in Lusatia, I left at a small distance,

the heights memorable for the defeat of Hohkirchen in 1758, where Marshal Keith was killed. How many pensive reflections must necessarily arise in the mind of his Prussian Majesty, when he reviews, as he now does, the theatre of his early prowess! With what sensations must he not revisit the scene of his alternate triumphs and defeats! How frequently must he behold in idea, the numerous commanders who perished in his quarrel, and over whose graves he is actually contending in the evening of his reign! After escaping unhurt from so many perils, he is now leading to battle the grandsons of those, who fought and conquered under his standard at Mollwitz.

Dresden appears to me still more agreeable on this second visit, than at the first: the environs are beautiful, far surpassing in picturesque scenery, even those of Vienna. They form a striking contrast to the tame depopulated expanse which invests Warsaw, and not less so to the sterile sands that surround Berlin and Potsdam. But independent

dent of local superiorities; other circumstances render it at present the most interesting place of residence in Europe. The vicinity of four great armies; the number of officers of rank who are continually passing through the city; its situation, at so inconsiderable a distance from the theatre of war, that every event which happens in either camp, is known here in a few hours afterwards: all these things make it far more amusing than either Berlin or Vienna, which by their more remote position know little except from report. Here, every movement and every action are canvassed with equal freedom and acuteness. Conversation and society derive animation from the scene performing before us; and I see nothing in Dresden which seems to have escaped the contagion, unless perhaps it be the Elector himself.

Infinite are the speculations, and various the opinions, on the past campaign; for such it may now, I believe, be termed, as the two Prussian armies are already retiring,

or retired out of Bohemia, and the military operations are at an end. It is not probable that the Austrians, who have hitherto systematically acted on the defensive, will suddenly change their plan, and pursue the retreating enemy into Saxony. Certainly no campaign in the course of the present century, has more disappointed expectation, produced fewer events, or been attended with so inconsiderable an effusion of blood. There are not wanting persons here, who criticise the King of Prussia's and Prince Henry's conduct, with extreme severity. They say, the great Frederic in 1778, is no more himself, than was Prince Eugene in 1734. They accuse him of wanting enterprize, of fearing to commit his reputation to hazard, and of allowing his troops to waste away in inaction. "After passing many months," say they, "in remonstrances and delays relative to the Bavarian succession, which he ought to have employed in arms, and thereby giving the Austrians time to prepare for his reception,

“ ception, he at length enters Bohemia.
“ What has he done? Has he opened a
“ way to Prague? Has he given battle to
“ Joseph the Second? Did he vanquish the
“ obstacles opposed to his junction with
“ Prince Henry? No! He could not effect
“ any one of these objects. After ravaging
“ and desolating some of the northern circles
“ of Bohemia, from which he has only car-
“ ried off a few hostages; he and his bro-
“ ther, alike frustrated in all their views,
“ have already fallen back upon Saxony and
“ Silesia. Far from attacking the enemy’s
“ lines, behind the Elbe, at Koniggratz,
“ as he did at Prague, at Torgau, and on
“ so many other occasions, during the great
“ war of seven years; we have neither seen
“ a siege, nor even witnessed a skirmish
“ which deserves the name. The campaign
“ is closed; and the Emperor, who never
“ yet was present at a battle, nor beheld
“ an army, except at the ceremony of a
“ review, has failed, and obtained a nega-
“ tive victory, over the greatest comman-

“ ders of the present age. If the Prince
“ Royal had led on the Prussians, we
“ should have been more successful; and at
“ least we should have given battle to the
“ enemy. Frederic has survived himself?
“ *Ce n'est plus que l'ombre du grand Fre-*
“ *deric,*” as he himself in his Memoirs, has
“ said of Prince Eugene in his last cam-
“ paign. He is no longer the same active
“ hero who fought at Rosbach, at Torgau,
“ and at Cunerisdorf.”

Such are the animadversions passed on his conduct, by those who censure the present campaign. I confess that the facts and arguments are at first sight calculated to make an impression; but on examination they will be found, in my opinion, no less unjust than unmerited. It is true that the campaign, which has been sterile in great events, offers nothing brilliant to the imagination. Frederic has neither atchieved the conquest of Bohemia, nor the capture of Prague. I will even admit that his antagonist, by compelling him to retire into his

his own dominions, has acquired a degree of reputation at his expence. But, allowing these principles, where has been the want of ability, enterprize, or ardour, in his Prussian Majesty? Let us examine dispassionately.

The war originates in the seizure of a part of Bavaria by the Court of Vienna, upon very problematical grounds of right or justice. If Frederic had not remonstrated; if he had instantly invaded Bohemia or Moravia, as he did in 1756, instead of sending reclamations and manifestos to Maria Theresa, he might probably have acquired more laurels; but he certainly would not have proved to his subjects and to all Europe, that he is animated by no other motive than the protection of the Germanic liberties. Such a cause, and such a conviction, outweigh in their effect upon mankind, the most brilliant victory. After fully demonstrating his moderation and anxious wish for peace, he at length has recourse to arms. Entering Bohemia on the Silesian quarter, he advances

into the kingdom, and finds Joseph the Second, with Lacy at his side, entrenched behind the Elbe, in an inaccessible camp, on the heights of Konigingratz; having under his command not less than a hundred thousand soldiers. Prince Henry of Prussia penetrates at the same time into Bohemia on another quarter, where he meets Laudohn advantageously posted, who impedes his further progress, or his approach towards the King. Joseph on his part declines, and even prohibits all offensive or hazardous operations, with the most unremitting solicitude, though far superior to the Prussians in force. Flanked by Laudohn on his left, and by Haddick on his right, while he was supplied with provisions from his own dominions in his rear; how could Frederic, under such disadvantages, and at every possible risk, force the Emperor to a general action? That he did not want the inclination, had it been practicable without the greatest temerity, is incontestible, since he made every effort for the purpose, but
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in vain. The Emperor's determination to bear all insults, even to see his provinces ravaged and ransomed, rather than hazard an engagement, was systematic and insuperable.

About the middle of August, while Frederic was encamped at Jaromirz in Bohemia, he rode out one morning with his nephew, the Hereditary Prince of Brunswic, in order to reconnoitre the enemy's position, and to judge whether there was no means of compelling the Austrians to a battle. "Eh bien, mon neveu," said he, after long examining their camp with his glass at his eye, "qu'en dites vous? N'y a t'il pas "moyen d'attaquer ces gens la?"—"Oui, "Sire" answered the Prince, "il y a bien "moyen; et je repondrai à votre Majesté "de forcer les lignes, et d'entrer dans les "tranchées l'épée à la main. Nous rem- "porterons la victoire; mais la moitié de "votre armée fera flambée." The King was too wise to wish to purchase even victory at so dear a rate, which, besides the vast effusion

effusion of blood, must have incapacitated him for effectually profiting of it, in an enemy's country. Content with having cooped up and immured the Imperial army in their camp, though superior in numbers to his own; after having fobified his troops for two months at the expence of Bohemia, finding it impossible to surmount the impediments to a junction with his brother, he gave orders to fall back to Schatzlar, near the frontiers of Silesia.

Never was retreat conducted with more consummate skill! It was, by the universal testimony of Prussian and Saxon officers, the triumph of the military art; every movement having been made with the accuracy of machinery, unaccompanied by hurry, embarrassment or confusion. Lacy vainly attempted to take advantage of the King's situation, by attacking his rear: not a man was lost in his retreat, nor the slightest advantage gained over the Prussian troops. The Prince Royal of Prussia eminently distinguished himself on the occasion; and

Frederic

Frederic was so charmed with the display of cool intrepidity, joined to military talents in his conduct, that forgetting his usual coldness towards the Heir Apparent, he embraced him in presence of all the Generals. "Vous n'êtes plus mon neveu," said he, "vous êtes aujourd'hui mon fils." At Schatzlar the King still continued to maintain himself several weeks, in defiance of the Austrians; desolating the northern circles of Bohemia, and carrying off contributions. He is now fallen back into his own dominions, or into those of Saxony; where he remains; and from whence, should the war continue, he will be able to open the campaign early in the ensuing spring, under more favourable circumstances.

After this short, but accurate statement, I leave you to decide, whether his enemies can justly compare him to Prince Eugene in his decline, or assert with reason, that he has survived his talents. Let us now examine Prince Henry's conduct, who commanded the other Prussian army; and who,

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on entering the territories of the enemy, found insuperable obstacles to his progress, or to his effecting a junction with the King. So completely had the Austrians occupied the passes, by which alone it was supposed he could penetrate into Bohemia, that they considered it impossible for him to overcome the difficulties in his way. It was only by profiting of their confidence in their own strength and precautions, as well as by movements equally rapid, masterly, and unexpected, that he entered the circle of Leutmeritz, through defiles either unknown to the Austrians themselves, or regarded by them as impervious to a body of troops. By this able manœuvre, he made prisoners a corps of fourteen hundred men stationed at Gabel, chiefly Italians, who were surprized at finding themselves invested and captured, before they knew or suspected the approach of an enemy.

Prince Henry, while advancing towards Prague, was nevertheless obliged to contend with impediments in themselves almost insurmountable

surmountable. Laudohn, and Prince Charles Lichtenstein, who were opposed to him, astonished that he had rendered abortive all their precautions, fell back, and allowed him to reach Budin. During the march, he remained for three days separated from his artillery; a circumstance of which if the Imperial Generals had been apprized, they doubtless might have attacked him with almost a certainty of success. Laudohn, probably by the Emperor's immediate direction, contented himself with adopting a defensive plan, calculated to check the Prince's further progress. In order to attain this end, he occupied a camp at Munchengrätz, so strong as to be inattackable; and so situated, as while it effectually covered the capital of Bohemia, to cut off all means of junction, or even of communication, between the King and his brother. Of the numerous couriers who were sent under every possible disguise, from one to the other, such was the vigilance of Laudohn, that none ever succeeded in reaching his

his destination, or conveying the slightest intelligence of their mutual operations.

Thus foiled in his endeavours to form a junction with the great Prussian army commanded by Frederic, and unable to force Laudohn in his lines, or to turn his flank; Prince Henry had no resource except to retire out of Bohemia. He has done so unmolested by the enemy, and yesterday reached Gishibel, a village belonging to Saxony, not far from Pirna. The difficulties with which he had to struggle in his retreat, arising from the badness of the roads, the mountainous nature of the country, and the advanced season of the year, were such as could only have been surmounted by equal fortitude, perseverance, and skill. But, how a general such as we know Laudohn to be, so quick to perceive, and so rapid to profit of the errors or embarrassments of his adversary, should have allowed the Prince to evacuate Bohemia, without falling upon his rear, we are here at a loss to conceive. It is certain that we do not recognize in his late

late conduct, the decision and velocity that characterized him at Glatz, at Landstut, and on so many other occasions where he has immortalized himself. Encumbered as Prince Henry was with baggage, and dragging after him a train of heavy artillery, it would have been almost impossible to prevent some loss or disaster. He has carried off immense contributions, and has filled this city with hostages or prisoners of war. I will not however attempt to deny or to conceal, that some degree of dissatisfaction is known to exist between Frederic and his brother, who partly impute to each other the failure of more complete success in their operations. It is likewise said, that the King highly disapproves the spirit of play which has pervaded the camp, and even the tent of the Prince. We know that he on his part is fullen, gloomy, and out of humour. He remains encamped at Otterdorf, a few miles distant, and permits his general officers to visit Dresden, but declines to do so himself. Platen and Mellen-

dorf

dorf are now here. The cavalry, Saxoni and Prussian, is deplorably ruined; owing to the necessity of harnessing all the horses, in order to draw the artillery out of the Bohemian defiles. The road from hence to Otterdorf, is strewn with the bodies of horses, either dead, or expiring of fatigue and ill usage: but the infantry is in good condition, and has comparatively suffered little from the campaign. Here I shall close the present letter, and remain,

Yours.

LETTER XXIV.

Review of the Saxon History.—Augustus the Second and Third.—Reign, death, and character of Frederic Christian.—Character and anecdotes of the reigning Elector of Saxony, Frederic Augustus.—Electress of Saxony.—Prince Charles.—Anecdotes of the Electress Dowager.

DRESDEN, October 13th, 1778.

BEFORE I quit this capital and country, to proceed to Ratisbon and Munich, it is natural that I should say something of the Sovereign and the Court of Saxony. During a period of near seventy years, while the Electors were Kings of Poland, that Crown, though it continued to be nominally elective, was almost considered as become hereditary in the Saxon line. It may however be justly doubted, whether except the title and honors of King, any real advantage accrued to Saxony, from

the elevation of their Princes to the Polish throne. Augustus the Second expended a great part of his Electoral revenues at Warsaw, either in maintaining himself on that tottering and venal eminence, from which he was once driven by Charles the Twelfth, or in purchasing the suffrages of the principal nobles and ecclesiastics in favour of his son. His numerous gallantries, his expensive taste, his extraordinary vigour of body, and his munificence, have rendered Augustus the Second not a little distinguished in the history of the present century. Even his natural sons conduced to immortalize their father. Marshal Saxe, who was one of them, deservedly fills perhaps a more distinguished place in the annals of time, than his legitimate brother, Augustus the Third, King of Poland. His mother was the beautiful Countess of Königsmark, whose brother, the ill-fated lover of Sophia Dorothea, Princess of Zell, perished at Hanover, in the manner which I have already related.

Augustus

Augustus the Second died only forty-five years ago, at Warsaw, of a mortification in his foot, caused by a blow which he gave himself, when stepping into his coach. The disease originated in a morbid habit of body, as two of his toes had been already amputated, previous to the accident which terminated his life. He was certainly an amiable and accomplished Prince, brave, humane, generous, and endowed with talents for captivating mankind. But, never was any Court more dissolute than that of Dresden under his reign. What shall we say of a Sovereign, who, as Lady Wortley Montague assures us, and she knew him personally; wooed the Countess of Cosel, by throwing at her feet a bag containing ten thousand Louis d'ors, with one hand; while with the other he broke a horse-shoe, and flung the pieces on the ground, as a proof that his strength was not inferior to his generosity! What are we to think of a man, who on hearing that the regent Duke of Orleans had expired in the arms of Ma-

dame de Valori; lifting his eyes and hands to Heaven, exclaimed, "Ah? que je meurs de la mort de ce juste?" It is the King of Prussia himself, who relates this anecdote of Augustus; the wit of which is far exceeded by its indecency and profligacy.

Notwithstanding the vices of his administration, the enormous waste of money which the purchase of his Polish kingdom occasioned, and the devastation of Saxony committed by Charles the Twelfth of Sweden; who, after dethroning Augustus, allowed his victorious troops to live at free quarters in the Electorate;—notwithstanding these misfortunes of his reign, his memory is dear to the Saxons, who remember only his magnificence, his affability, and the splendor of his Court. The late King of Poland, Augustus the Third, bore no resemblance to his father in the principal features of his character. He inherited indeed much of the bodily strength, but not the activity, ambition, or address of his predecessor. Mild, indolent, and destitute
of

energy, he was not formed to contend with so formidable a neighbour and antagonist as the present King of Prussia. Calculated for times of peace and repose, his abilities were unequal to situations of emergency or difficulty. In the protection of all the arts, and in the gratification of his passion for music as well as painting, he knew hardly any bounds. During more than twenty years, from his accession in 1733, to the commencement of the great war in 1756, no Prince in Europe could vie with him in these respects. Happy in the midst of his numerous family, the illegitimate branches of which were scarcely less dear to him than his own sons; occupied in forming the famous "Gallery of Dresden," or in assembling the finest orchestra that Germany had ever seen: Augustus devolved the cares of government on his Minister and favourite, Count Bruhl.

But the calm so long enjoyed by Saxony, ushered in a period of unprecedented calamity. Relying on his close connections and

alliances with the House of Austria, he imprudently entered into the secret machinations, which Maria Theresa, supported by Elizabeth, Empress of Russia, set on foot to reduce the power, and to divide the dominions of the family of Brandenburg. Frederick having anticipated the execution of the plan, by measures of equal vigour and decision, Saxony became the sacrifice to Augustus's want of foresight, and to his injudicious plans of aggrandizement. The remainder of his life was only a tissue of misfortune, aggravated by every species of disgrace. He saw Dresden laid almost in ashes, his enemy master of the Electorate, his army reduced to surrender at discretion, and his own person scarcely secure among his elective subjects at Warsaw. His wife, the late Queen of Poland, daughter of the Emperor Joseph the First, a Princess of exemplary piety and virtue; endeavoured to oppose a feeble and ineffectual barrier to Frederick's military severity. Her days were embittered, and her end accelerated by the

Prussian

Prussian exactions, of which, for several years, she was a reluctant spectatress. Hardly was Augustus restored to his capital and hereditary dominions, by the peace of 1762, when death terminated his reign. Saxony, at his decease, exhibited a deplorable picture of depopulation, misery, and desolation, not to be exceeded by any thing of which the present age furnishes an example.

His eldest son and successor would nevertheless, unquestionably have been elected King of Poland, if, by a singular fatality, he had not followed his father to the grave, in the space of a few weeks. So deep a root had the Saxon Family taken in that country, by the almost uninterrupted possession of the Crown ever since the decease of John Sobieski; that neither the intrigues, nor the armies of Catharine, could probably have raised any other candidate to the throne. But the forms necessary, previous to the election of a Sovereign, and the time that elapsed from the demise of Augustus,

to the period of filling the vacancy as prescribed by the Polish constitution, removed the only obstacle to the Empress's views. The new Elector was carried off by the small-pox, at Dresden, in the vigour of his age, on the 17th of December 1763, after a reign of only ten weeks. His premature end overturned all the projects of the Court of Saxony, and enabled Catharine, in defiance of every impediment, to confer the Crown of Poland on Count Poniatowski.

Those persons who were acquainted with the late Elector, Frederic Christian, assure me that he was an enlightened, and an amiable Prince. His parts were not brilliant, but his judgment was sound, his understanding solid, and his mind enlarged. Like all his predecessors since Augustus the Second, who in order to attain the Crown of Poland, renounced the protestant tenets, he had been educated in, and he professed, the Catholic Faith. But his adherence to the Romish communion, did not prevent him from giving the most conspicuous demonstrations

strations of a liberal mind. During his short reign, he conferred offices of the highest trust indiscriminately on his subjects of both persuasions; and immediately after his accession, he began by naming four Lutheran "Dames d'Honneur" to attend on the Electress. This innovation in the Court of etiquette, the result of a superior understanding, was soon suppressed on his decease.

In his person and figure, the late Elector was eminently unfortunate. His face, arms, and breast, were well proportioned, and when seated at a table, he presented the appearance of a handsome man; but from his waist downwards, he was deformed, his thighs and legs being crooked and entirely contracted. Many reasons have been assigned for so unhappy a conformation. The most common, and that which has obtained general belief in Saxony is, that his mother, the late Queen of Poland, while breeding, was so affected at the sight of a deer, which being shot in the haunch, was dragged before

fore her, the legs trailing along the ground and bleeding; that it occasioned the deformity of her son. It is difficult to believe, but more difficult to disprove, so extraordinary a story. Whatever was the cause, the effect was irremediable, and baffled all medical skill. Baths of every kind were resorted to in vain, for the restoration of his limbs; and physicians from every part of Europe were consulted to no purpose. The Elector remained a cripple during his whole life.

To Frédéric Christian succeeded his eldest son, a minor of thirteen; but the administration of Saxony was intermediately committed to Prince Francis Xavier, his uncle. The reigning Elector, Frederic Augustus, is in the prime of his age, not having yet completed his twenty-eighth year. "Of a middle size, inclining rather to short than tall, his limbs are neither active nor muscular, though he possesses sound health and a strong constitution. Over his whole figure there is diffused something, easier perceived than described, altogether destitute

destitute of grace, and deficient in elegance or dignity. Nor are his manners calculated to compensate for the want of personal accomplishments. In his address he is shy, distant, and reserved. Coldness and inanimation characterize his behaviour, pervade his conversation, and accompany all his actions. He displays none of the gracious and communicative disposition, which almost equally characterizes in different ways, his three contemporaries, Frederic the Second, Stanislaus, and the present Emperor.

If nature has denied him these external graces of figure and deportment, she has made him amends by conferring on him more solid endowments. In application, strength of mind; and talents for government, the Elector is by no means deficient. His reign has hitherto been a happy period for his subjects, whose true interests he has discernment to perceive, and whose felicity he has sufficient principle to consult, in preference to every other object of pursuit. It is not the aggrandizement of his house, the
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acquisition of a precarious foreign crown, or the extension of his dominions; but the security, protection, and renovation of Saxony, which regulate his system of policy, Rigid in his morals, and tinctured with bigotry on articles of religious belief, he represses with severity the slightest deviations from propriety of conduct. No men or women of dissolute characters will ever attain to favor or preferment in Saxony, under the present reign. In gallantry, whether of mind or person, he is totally deficient; and towards the sex, considered as objects of passion, he is peculiarly cold. The Elector, though young, never entertained a mistress, nor has he hitherto had any children, legitimate or illegitimate. He seems to be in a great measure insensible to the pains, as well as the pleasures of love; an exemption which perhaps equally entitles him to our envy, and our compassion.

Frederic Augustus has no taste for splendor, or the luxurious magnificence of a court, like his two predecessors the Kings
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of Poland. All his amusements are sober, temperate, and confined to a small number of persons. He dances, it is true, at the court-balls in Carnival, and is fond of that diversion, if he can with propriety be said to be fond of any thing. Twice every week he goes to hunt at the palace of Moritzburg; but he is accompanied on these occasions, by scarcely any attendants or courtiers. For the fine arts, he betrays no partiality; and though the celebrated gallery of paintings, collected by his grandfather Augustus the Third at an immense expence, communicates with, and is in effect a part of the Electoral Palace, he rarely visits it. That noble repository of the works of the great masters, Italian and Flemish, is left for the inspection of strangers. His Prussian Majesty, on the contrary, when master of Saxony during the late war, found leisure amidst dangers internal and foreign, to pass some hours every week, in contemplating the models of taste and excellence assembled at Dresden.

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The Elector, though not distinguished either by his patronage of Science, or his passion for the arts, is nevertheless a prince of a cultivated understanding. In natural philosophy and various other branches of knowledge, he has made considerable progress. He is musical, and performs with execution on the harpsichord: yet even his musical pleasures are solitary; and he rarely, if ever, permits any one to be present on those occasions. For military affairs he has never manifested any talent or inclination. He wears indeed frequently an uniform; but though the parade where his guards and troops exercise daily, is situated within a hundred paces of the palace, he scarcely ever appears there, and contents himself with inspecting them from the windows of his apartments. Had he felt a disposition to signalize himself in the field, he might have found an occasion at this moment, when an Emperor and a King are both at the head of their respective armies, the one to attack, and the other to defend his Electorate!

torate ! It is well known that Prince Henry of Prussia, a commander scarcely inferior to any of the present age, and of years so much more advanced, offered to serve under the Elector, if he had been disposed to take the field. The proposal was declined.

Count Marcolini, his only favourite, and his constant companion, is an Italian, about five-and-forty years of age, who having been formerly a page of honour in the Court of Saxony, became known to Frederic Augustus at an early period of life. Of a disposition amiable and conciliating, he has improved the opportunities which his place and situation afforded, to attain the highest degree of personal favour with his master. He has in fact neither rival nor competitor, for the eminence which he occupies. Count Stutterheim fills the employment, and performs the functions of first minister; but Marcolini, without the ostentation or responsibility of office, possesses no inconsiderable share of political influence.

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In whatever point of view we survey the Elector, his leading characteristic is a tranquillity of mind approaching to apathy. Those who know him most intimately, assert that he is never greatly agitated by any pursuit or occupation. If he hunts, it is not so much from a natural ardour for the chase, as from conviction that the exercise is salutary and beneficial to his health. He neither takes a lively interest in his palaces, nor in his horses, nor in the company of ladies, nor in the conversation of his courtiers. Of course, he is seldom betrayed into those weaknesses or errors which originate from sensibility, the chief source of refined gratification. Distant and retired, he neither inspires warm attachment in others, nor is he animated with strong affection for those about him. A narrow and confined education, joined to elevated ideas of his own rank, have added strength to his habitual reserve. But his defects are private and personal, negative rather than affirmative, and terminating in himself: while his virtues

virtues which are public, diffuse happiness through his dominions. He will not indeed, be remembered in future ages, by his protection of talents, by his skill in tournaments, by his valour, or the magnificence of his disposition, like Augustus the Second. But his reign will probably be recollected and commemorated as an æra, from which Saxony, plunged into every species of misfortune by the extravagance or incapacity of its Princes, revived under the wise and paternal government of an economical and pacific Sovereign.

The reigning Electress, his wife, Maria Amelia Augusta, is of the Palatine House of Deux-Ponts, and was born in 1752. Her person is tall, elegant, and dignified, though she cannot with propriety be termed handsome, her face being marked with the small-pox. She has fine hair in prodigious quantity, a fair complexion, eyes by no means destitute of expression, and an interesting countenance. Her manner, which impresses at first with the idea of distance and reserve, becomes on nearer acquaintance,

ance, easy, affable, and pleasing. In conversation she is lively and communicative; without nevertheless possessing either superior talents, or a very cultivated understanding. Her life, like that of Princesses in general, is uniform, and destitute of gaiety or variety. She goes indeed regularly to the comedy, to the chace, and to the country: but the Elector commonly accompanies her on these occasions, which can scarcely be denominated parties of pleasure. The Electress has little taste for sedentary amusements; a circumstance the more perhaps to be regretted, as she passes many of her private hours in solitude or seclusion, without company of any kind. Music and painting form her principal resources. Over her husband she is supposed to possess no political influence; and their marriage, which hitherto has not been productive of issue, may be considered rather as an alliance of state, than as an union of mutual inclination.

Her sterility must be regarded as more than an ordinary misfortune to the Elector, and to Saxony; since Prince Charles, who is

his next brother, and his presumptive heir, labours under all the varieties of deformity which can meet in the human frame. I have the honour to know him, and to see him frequently. Scarron himself must have been handsome, compared to Prince Charles of Saxony; whose face, hands, body, legs, and feet, are all more or less distorted. Incapable of walking, standing, or mounting a horse, on account of his numerous infirmities, he is wheeled about from one apartment to another. Under such an accumulation of corporeal ailments, he is nevertheless chearful, conversible, and almost gay. One should be tempted to suppose by his conversation and deportment, that he is not unhappy. From necessity, not less than from inclination, he has cultivated his mind, the only part of his formation which admits of improvement. It is singular, but true, that he was not born in a state of deformity; he gradually became so at the age of eleven or twelve, previous to which period his limbs were apparently well made: he is now about

fix-and-twenty. Such a person seems to be incapacitated by his infirmities for marriage. Yet, as the Elector has hitherto no children, and as the succession would by his death devolve on Prince Charles, the Electress Dowager his mother wishes to procure him a bride. For the honour of human nature and of wedlock, it is to be hoped that the project will never be carried into execution.

As there remain, besides the Elector and Prince Charles, two younger brothers, the Princes Anthony and Maximilian, who have already attained to manhood, and who labour under no bodily defects; such a measure can hardly be esteemed necessary in order to prevent the extinction of the Saxon male line in the present House. No event can indeed be apparently more improbable at this time, than such a failure. But, should it ever take place, contrary to all appearances; and of course, the reigning, or "Albertine branch," become extinct; the Electoral dignity, and the Saxon dominions, (after passing through the surviving

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sons of Augustus the Third, if such there were remaining alive,) would revert to the elder, or "Ernestine branch," which is now reigning at Weimar. Germany would then witness one of the most extraordinary events which its internal history and constitution present: namely, the restoration of the descendants of John Frederic, Elector of Saxony, to their ancient patrimonial title and territories. He was despoiled and degraded after the battle of Muhlberg, by the Emperor Charles the Fifth, above two centuries ago. You may probably recollect that the virtuous and unfortunate Prince to whom I allude, for his adherence to the Protestant Faith, no less than for his generous resistance to the Imperial power, which then menaced the total extinction of the Germanic liberties; was deprived of his Electoral dominions and dignity, which Charles conferred on his cousin Maurice, and on his male descendants. In their line it still continues: but by subsequent stipulations it was nevertheless settled, that if

they ever should become extinct, the posterity of John Frederic should be again reinstated in their original honors and possessions. This is the case, which though highly improbable, would be realized, should the present Elector and his three brothers die without male issue.

The Electress Dowager, Maria Antonietta, mother to the four Princes abovementioned, may be denominated in every sense, a distinguished woman. She is daughter to that most unfortunate Prince, Charles the Seventh, who, from Elector of Bavaria, was raised by France to the Imperial dignity, in the year 1741. Driven by the forces of Maria Theresa from his hereditary dominions, and compelled to take refuge in an inn at Francfort, while Munich was in the hands of the Austrians; he soon afterwards terminated his days; the victim of French policy, no less than of his own ambition. His daughter, of whom I now speak, is about fifty-four; and, if I may judge from her present infirmities, as well as from her broken

broken state of health, does not promise to attain to a very advanced age. In her person, even when young, she never can have been agreeable. Her figure is short; her face red, retaining the traces of the small-pox, and little calculated to procure admiration. Yet, in defiance of so many natural disadvantages, an air of sense and intelligence illuminates her countenance. Few Princesses possess more knowledge of the world, more gracious manners, or greater powers of pleasing in conversation. Mistress of various languages, acquainted with the human heart, and ingratiating in her address, she conduces not a little to render the Saxon Court agreeable to strangers. Her ambition is not inferior to her political talents; but she has at present no field on which to exert either; as her son, the Elector no longer consults her on matters of a public nature, nor allows her to interfere in state affairs. Frustrated of the Crown of Poland by her husband's premature decease, at the moment

when she seemed about to be raised to that throne: and now removed from the active scenes of state, she happily finds resources in her love of letters. A patroness of the Arts, she has adorned her mind by the perusal of the works of the finest writers in most European languages. I was surpris'd to find her so well versed in ours; and I have too many obligations to her, for the distinguished manner in which she has treated me during my stay here, not to speak of her with a degree of gratitude that I am aware is allied to partiality.

It is with regret that I again quit Saxony: but my residence at Dresden now draws to a close; the season of the year compelling us to set out for Munich. We would willingly pass through Bohemia; but it is still a scene of war, and though hostilities between the great armies have altogether ceased, there is no communication open from this city to Prague. Under these circumstances we must therefore of necessity take

take our course through the Upper Palatinate, and Ratisbon, Sir John Stepney, who to all the accomplishments of a gentleman, adds the hospitality and kindness of a friend, accompanies us to Freyberg. I need not remind you that he is his Majesty's minister at the court of Saxony; and on both my visits to this capital, his attentions have left the deepest impression on my mind.

LETTER XXV.

State of Ratisbon.—Bavaria.—Aspect of the Country.—Munich.—Character and anecdotes of the Elector Palatine, Charles Theodore.—Explanation of the pacific system adopted by that Prince.—Court of Munich.

MUNICH, November 3, 1778.

IN my way from Dresden to this capital, I passed near a week at Ratisbon, which city, without being in a state of siege, is nevertheless as completely invested at present by the troops of Maria Theresa and Joseph, as Dantzic is by the forces of Frederic. Ratisbon is built on the southern bank of the Danube, opposite to which, on the northern side, stands the little town of Ambhof, at the distance of scarce a hundred yards. Two bridges, one of stone, the other of wood, connect them, the river being

being divided into two streams at the spot. We were stopped on our arrival, by the Austrian soldiers posted at Amhof; of which place the Court of Vienna took possession in common with the rest of Lower Bavaria, upon the decease of the late Elector, about ten months ago. It must be confessed that Ratisbon is thereby placed in the most critical and perilous situation, surrounded on every side by the Imperial troops, who may, at any moment, enter the city, and sequester it in virtue of some antiquated pretension. After the recent seizure of so considerable a portion of the Bavarian succession, what part of the German Empire can be regarded as secure? The terror occasioned by it, has already operated universally; and it has even been agitated to remove the Diet from Ratisbon, where that assembly has been held for ages, to some other place more protected from violence. The result of the present war between Austria and Prussia, will determine how far the Germanic

manic system is, or is not likely to continue unviolated; a question which can only be decided by arms.

From the gates of Ratibon to those of Landshut, a space of more than fifty miles, the whole intermediate country is occupied by Maria Theresa's troops, and become in all respects incorporated with her other vast dominions. It is a very fertile portion of Bavaria, producing immense crops of grain; and must prove, if finally retained by her, an inestimable acquisition of power and resources to the House of Austria. The population is not inferior to the exuberance of the soil; and when its local position is considered, which protects the western frontier of the Empress Queen's territories, where she is most vulnerable, I am not surprised that Prussia and Saxony have opposed her acquiring so important an augmentation to her strength. At Landshut commence the actual dominions of the Elector Palatine, as Duke of Bavaria, which continue uninterruptedly

ruptedly from thence to Munich; but it is by no means so fine a tract as that recently seized on by the Court of Vienna.

The Bavarian peasants appear to me a race of men far inferior to the Saxons in bodily formation, and not less in the plenty and riches of their farms, as well as in cultivation of manners. Superstition and poverty, blended with distress, are visible in every village, and almost in every countenance. Such a contrast may partly result from physical causes, but must be principally attributed to the genius of the government. The approaches to Munich bear no similarity, either in beauty or in fertility, to the environs of Dresden. For many miles before I arrived here, the country, which is level, exhibits few marks either of industry or of riches. The city of Munich itself, though large, handsome, and full of elegant buildings, wants the vivacity and gaiety of the capital of Saxony. It must however be admitted, that the mountains of the Tyrol form a sublime and picturesque object,

object, extending across the whole horizon to the south, at the distance of twenty leagues, their summits covered with perpetual snow.

It is not a little curious and striking, to find Munich in a state of profound repose, the Court occupied in amusements, and no indication or appearance of war, at a moment when Austria, Prussia, and Saxony, are contending for a part of Bavaria itself. The Elector Palatine, who as it would seem, should, not less from inclination than from necessity, have drawn his sword, in order to maintain the integrity of the succession devolved to him, remains passive and neutral in his own quarrel. He even sanctions the usurpation of a considerable part of his territories, and legitimates, as far as he is able, the violence of the Imperial cabinet. How are we to account for such a line of conduct, in a Prince hitherto considered as neither pusillanimous, nor incapable of defending his rights? How are we to reconcile it to the ordinary
maxims

maxims of political interest, or of private honor? I will endeavour, from the lights which I possess, to explain in some measure the secret motives of so extraordinary and mysterious a policy.

Charles Theodore, the reigning Elector Palatine, is no longer young, nor, as we must suppose, under the influence of any passions except such as are compatible with, if they do not contribute to, his felicity and repose. Endowed with judgment, and possessed of no mean abilities, he is nevertheless unambitious; and is more attached to his pleasures, than desirous of aggrandizing his house, or extending his dominions. In attention and application to public business he is not deficient. His leisure is principally divided between the gratifications of appetite, and the pursuits of literature, to both of which he alternately sacrifices. He no longer rides or hunts, having renounced for these ten or twelve years past, the diversion of the chace, on account of a dizziness to which he is subject: but in the conviviality

viviality of the table he indulges freely. As a Sovereign, compelled to the observance of certain ceremonious forms, he dines every day in public, about one o'clock : but, to compensate for the sacrifice, he sups in private ; and at these select parties the Elector lays aside all restraint. Ladies who are distinguished by their attractions of person and of mind, contribute to animate the conversation, which is by no means confined within the limits of austere severity. His female attachments have not, however, at any period of his life, been distinguished by delicacy of sentiment, or selection of choice. On the contrary, they have rather been marked by opposite characteristics. Few princes now living, none perhaps except the King of Prussia, have cultivated their minds more assiduously, or with greater success. His reading is extensive ; and to the information derived from books, he adds the advantages of travel, as well as a perfect knowledge of mankind. He has visited Italy, as a lover of the arts ; and he reads
the

the works of the poets and historians of that country, ancient and modern, in their original languages. In English, I am assured he is not less conversant. Though by persuasion a Catholic, he is in no respect a bigot; and if we try him by the ordinary standard of princes, he certainly occupies a place much above mediocrity.

When young, for he is now fifty-four, he was married to his cousin, a princess of the same branch of the Palatine house from which he is himself descended. She is still alive, but they have never had any issue. The Electress Palatine, Maria Elizabeth of Sulzbach, who was born in 1721, is near four years older than her husband. Neither her face, nor her figure, can ever have had any pretensions to beauty; but she is a woman of parts and spirit. In her sterility is to be discovered the leading cause of Charles Theodore's political conduct. It is in that defect that we must trace the principle of his apathy and indifference relative to the preservation of his dominions.

Destitute of legitimate descendants, and without hope of having any by his present wife ; succeeding to the late Elector of Bavaria, in consequence of the extinction of that branch of the Palatine family ; and unattached to his presumptive successor, the Duke of Deux-Ponts ; he feels no ambition to transmit entire the succession to a collateral and distant heir. All his affections and inclinations are converted into another channel. He has five natural children, two male and three female, for whom he expresses the warmest attachment. One of them, who is married to Frederic William, Prince of Issembourg, and to whom he is particularly partial, is now here at Munich. The Imperial Court, well informed of the Elector's sentiments political and private, has profited with address of his partiality towards his illegitimate issue. Prince Kaunitz has found means to convey to him assurances, on the part of Maria Theresa and Joseph, that in return for his neutrality and acquiescence in their claims upon Bavaria, they will

will provide, in a distinguished manner for all his natural children. Nor have they neglected to awaken his jealousy, and to excite his resentment, at the opposition which he has experienced upon this point from the Duke of Deux-Ponts.

Influenced by these considerations, which operate forcibly in his bosom, Charles Theodore hitherto holds firm to his convention with the House of Austria. Neither the murmurs of his new subjects, who feel for the humiliation of the Bavarian line and name, nor the remonstrances of Prussia and Saxony, can induce him to take up arms in his own cause. He sees with philosophic indifference, or silent disregard, the most beautiful portion of his dominions torn from him by foreign violence. It is however, matter of reasonable doubt, how long he can persist in so passive a system. Those persons who have access to him in his private hours, assert that he is visibly uneasy and disturbed; that he wishes to drown reflection; and as the best means of effecting

it, that he has recourse to the same expedient which Alexander used, when desirous of avoiding the painful importunity of thought. I am assured likewise, that in his own family he experiences the most pointed opposition, not to say the severest reproaches. The Electress his wife, as a Princess of the Palatine family, feels for the wounded dignity of her husband. The Duchess Dowager of Bavaria her sister, sprung from the same origin, participates in the Electress's emotions. She is a woman of superior endowments of mind, the intimate friend and correspondent of His Prussian Majesty, with whom she maintains a constant intercourse. When these Princesses are alone with the Elector, they express their sentiments in language of the utmost asperity, and endeavour to rouse him from his inglorious inaction. Time will shew how far these efforts can surmount his affection for his natural children, added to his love of repose.

I was presented to his Electoral Highness a few days ago. His manner is rather polite

lite than dignified ; nor do the lines of his countenance, which are harsh, saturnine, and strong, prepossess at first sight in his favor. He has a large forehead, black eyebrows, his nose hooked and prominent ; his figure manly, but not graceful, of a middle size, inclining towards corpulency. In general he wears an uniform, and the insignia of no less than three orders of knighthood. One is the "Golden Fleece," sent him by the Court of Vienna on his accession to the Bavarian dominions, as a mark of conciliation and respect, at the very moment when they were despoiling him of his territories.

The Court of Munich does not strike me as brilliant, though the Palatine and Bavarian Nobility are in some degree seen united here under a common Sovereign. Nor is the Electoral Palace either a regular, or a beautiful structure. One apartment, a bed-chamber, the furniture of which is said to have cost a hundred thousand pounds sterling, was fitted up by order of the late

Emperor, Charles the Seventh. After surveying the splendid chamber which he occupied when living, it was a curious transition to descend into the obscure subterranean vault where he now reposes, in the church of the Theatins. His remains are deposited in a simple coffin, composed of block tin, and on it this inscription :

“ Carolus Septimus,
“ Romanorum Imperator,
“ Semper Augustus.”

Close by his side, unconscious of the wars which at this moment desolate Europe, to which he has given rise, is laid the Elector his son, who died only a few months ago. Such a scene is calculated to awaken many reflections ; but as they would be rather gloomy and philosophical, than of a cheerful description, I leave them to your own suggestion, and conclude by informing you that to-morrow we shall set out for Vienna.

LETTER XXVI.

General opinions entertained at Vienna, relative to the conduct of the campaign.—State of Vienna and of the Court—Arrival of the Emperor.

VIENNA, November 28, 1778.

AFTER having visited the Polish, Saxon, and Bavarian capitals, I arrived here from Munich three weeks ago. Our journey through Bavaria and Austria was rapid: but two impressions which it has left on my mind are never to be erased. The first was at Welz in Upper Austria, where Charles the Fifth, Duke of Lorraine, when expiring, dictated his memorable letter to the Emperor Leopold, whose sister he had married. Expelled by Louis the Fourteenth from his native dominions, expatriated, and compelled to seek service under a foreign Prince, he was on his road to Vienna, when a mortal disease attacked him at Welz. In this

situation, he addressed the following lines to Leopold. I cite them from memory. "Sire, " J'étois en chemin pour me rendre aux " piéds de votre Majesté Imperiale, quand " je me trouve arrêté par un plus grand " maitre que lui. Je laisse en mourant une " sœur que vous touche, des enfans à qui " je ne laisse que mon épée, et des sujets " qui sont dans l'oppression." It seems impossible to exceed the laconic sublimity of this parting address, which is far more simple and affecting in my opinion than Adrian's lines to his soul, before his decease. The view from the bridge across the Danube at Lintz, was not less calculated to leave on my memory the deepest and most pleasing recollections. The scenery is wild, and baffles description; nor do I allow myself to engage in the attempt, which would insensibly lead me from the principal object of my attention, Vienna.

The Imperial Court, as well as the metropolis at large, seem to be plunged into a sort of melancholy and gloomy repose, which

which has succeeded to the late campaign. Disappointment and dejection however may be easily perceived, nor are they, indeed, attempted to be concealed. I see no public marks of exultation, and I hear no paegeyrics pronounced on the Emperor's military achievements. If the conduct of Frederic is severely criticized at Dresden, that of Joseph is far more loudly reprobated at Vienna. I dined yesterday at Prince Coloredo's, where a numerous company was assembled. On my right hand sat an officer of distinction, who had served in the Moravian army during the whole summer; and we freely discussed the operations of the two great leaders, as well as their respective claims to approbation and applause.

“ Never,” said he, “ since the accession
 “ of the reigning Empress, during eight-
 “ and-thirty years, have the Austrians ex-
 “ hibited so inglorious a spectacle to Eu-
 “ rope, as in the present campaign. We
 “ have indeed in former periods been more
 “ unfortunate; we have been defeated and
 “ put

“ to the sword: but we have never yet,
“ with superior numbers, at the beginning
“ of the campaign, in the midst of our own
“ territories, and possessing all the means
“ of offensive war, submitted to be shut up
“ and besieged within our lines. At the
“ most disastrous period of the late war in
“ 1757, after the defeat which we sustained
“ at Prague, Daun would not have adopted
“ so humiliating a plan, though he might
“ have been justified in pursuing it. If
“ ever offensive operations were necessary
“ in order to inspire the troops with ardor,
“ they were so in the present campaign. It
“ was indispensable, after a peace of fifteen
“ years, to shew the Austrian soldier that he
“ was not inferior to the Prussian, either in
“ discipline, in courage, or in leaders. But
“ what has the Emperor done? He has im-
“ pressed an indelible conviction on all his
“ officers and soldiers, that whatever may
“ be the justice of his cause, he feels his
“ inability to maintain it in the field. He
“ has tacitly admitted the Prussian superi-
“ ority,

“ ority. From the inaccessible heights of
“ Konigingratz, Joseph beheld the finest
“ provinces of Bohemia plundered, with-
“ out daring to make an effort for their
“ defence. Frederic has carried off im-
“ mense contributions, and deeply im-
“ printed the terror of his arms in every
“ village, and on every inhabitant. Was
“ any exertion made to impede his retreat
“ out of Bohemia, when loaded with plun-
“ der? None. He retired without our
“ scarcely daring to molest him, and he
“ will return far more formidable in the
“ ensuing spring.

“ But, our misfortunes and our disgrace
“ do not stop here. The pernicious pre-
“ sence of the Emperor has diffused them
“ over every part of the military opera-
“ tions, and prevented our success, where,
“ without his interference, it would have
“ been equally certain and brilliant. Though
“ the King of Prussia was able to effect his
“ retreat without confusion to Schatzlar, in
“ sight of the Emperor and Marshal Lacy ;
“ Prince Henry of Prussia could not have
“ retired

“ retired with equal impunity into Saxony,
“ under the eyes of Laudohn. That able
“ commander, who was encamped at Mun-
“ chengratz; after effectually preventing
“ by the position which he had taken, the
“ junction of the two armies, only waited
“ for the favorable moment of action. He
“ knew the impediments to Prince Henry’s
“ retreat into Saxony, the ruined condition
“ of his cavalry, the difficulty of dragging
“ his artillery through almost impassable
“ roads, and the impossibility of his mak-
“ ing effectual resistance, if vigorously at-
“ tacked. Laudohn had even formed all
“ his dispositions for the purpose, had
“ issued his final orders, and was about to
“ execute them with his characteristic rapi-
“ dity on the following morning at day-
“ break. Our success must have been in-
“ fallible. But, for our misfortune, his
“ Imperial Majesty arrived from Konigin-
“ gratz, in an open carriage, alone, on the
“ evening before the destined attack. All
“ Laudohn’s plans were instantly suspended
“ and reversed; we remained inactive; and
“ Prince

“ Prince Henry, like the King his brother,
“ closed the campaign triumphantly. It
“ is thus that we are sacrificed, counter-
“ acted, and dishonoured. How can it be
“ otherwise? The Empress, we are not ig-
“ norant, from the first instant has depre-
“ cated a rupture, and only wishes for
“ peace. The Emperor breathes war, but
“ knows not how to conduct it, though for
“ our misfortune, he aspires to superin-
“ tend all the operations in person. Prince
“ Kaunitz fluctuates between both; de-
“ sirous of repose, yet anxious to gratify
“ a Prince whose passion is ambition, and
“ who may soon become his sole master.
“ Such is the actual state of our affairs.”

I confess myself not a little inclined to admit the justice of this picture, which is certainly true, though perhaps highly coloured. It is stamped in legible characters on every countenance here, and pervades every conversation. All the operations of war are however, for the present closed, or suspended by the season. Frederic, at sixty-seven, no longer braves the snows, nor
keeps

keeps the field, as he did twenty years ago, when contending for his crown and life. He is retired into Silesia, and has disposed of his troops in winter-quarters. A similar conduct is pursued by the Austrians. When I arrived here on the seventh of this month, I found all the great general officers already returned. Lacy, Laudohn, Prince Charles Lichtenstein, had quitted the army of Bohemia; as Duke Albert of Saxe-Teschen had done that of Moravia. The Archduke Maximilian was scarcely recovered from a long and severe illness, with which he had been attacked in the camp at Konigingratz. The Emperor alone, absent in Bohemia, was still occupied in issuing directions relative to the cantonment of the forces, and inspecting the frontier. As some compensation for his absence, the Great Duke and Duchess of Tuscany came here in September, on a visit to the Empress Queen; but their presence, whatever personal consolation it may afford her, is far from diffusing hitherto the slightest degree of gaiety over the Court or capital. They remain almost
con-

constantly secluded in the Imperial Palace, without mixing in any of the amusements of Vienna.

After being long and impatiently expected, the Emperor reached this city five days ago, at ten in the morning of the 23d, from Olmutz. He came incognito in his post-chaise, with scarcely any attendants. In order to enjoy the pleasure of surprizing the Empress, he did not even permit his arrival to be announced; and having purposely taken his way through the least frequented streets of Vienna, he got undiscovered to the palace. Quitting his carriage, he ran hastily up a private staircase which led to her apartment, and before she was prepared for it, he threw himself into her arms. Maria Theresa's emotions of joy at seeing her son again, were not less violent than had been her grief at his departure for Bohemia in April, and she was for some minutes overcome by their force. I saw the Emperor next day at court, there being a gala in honour of the Great Duchess of Tuscany's birth-day, where he was present.

sent. He looks sun-burnt and thin, as might be naturally expected, but otherwise in perfect health ; and he assumed a gaiety of manners and deportment in the drawing-room, which appeared to severe observers to border on affectation. No demonstrations of joy, public or private, have followed his arrival, and the winter seems to begin under very unfavourable auspices for a future residence at Vienna. Many of the great nobility, whose estates lie in the northern provinces of Bohemia, have suffered extremely by the Prussian and Saxon depredations. The army is discontented ; while the inferior people murmur at the increase of taxes, and look forward with natural apprehension, to their probable augmentation. Almost every one seems to dread the continuance of war, and to hope that winter may not merely interpose a temporary cessation of hostilities, but produce overtures of peace. Time will shew whether their expectations are likely to be gratified.

LETTER XXVII.

Concern of the Empress at the birth of a French Princess.—Activity of the Emperor's character.—State of the public mind at Vienna, at the close of the year 1778.

VIENNA, December 30, 1778.

MARIA THERESA in addition to the public sources of uneasiness and anxiety arising out of the war, which agitate her mind, is at this moment entirely occupied with a domestic misfortune, if such it may be justly esteemed; for it can in fact only be termed a disappointment. Yesterday, a courier arrived from Versailles, to announce that the Queen of France has brought into the world a daughter. After near nine years of sterility, her pregnancy was an event which inspired this court with the liveliest joy. All the labors of the Empress Queen, and of her minister Prince

Kaunitz, by blending the Austrian and Bourbon families, with a view to extinguish the long hereditary animosities of the two Crowns, remain still incomplete while there is not a Dauphin. The Queen of Naples, and the Archduchess of Parma, who are married to two other princes of the House of Bourbon, have both performed this essential service to the state, and have produced sons. Maria Theresa has omitted no spiritual exertions on her part, to ensure the like benediction on her youngest daughter. As the means which she conceived to be most effectual, she has wearied Heaven with prayers, and prostrated herself before a variety of saints and altars, to obtain so great a boon. You will perhaps hardly believe that masses and supplications for the Queen's safe delivery, at which her Imperial Majesty assisted in person, have for several weeks past, been performed publicly to a "Vierge grosse," in one of the churches of Vienna. The dress and figure of the statue in question, which is that of the Virgin,

gin, represent a pregnant woman. The Empress's vows have not, for this time, been fully heard; but as the impediments which prevented the Queen of France from having issue, whatever they were, are now surmounted, her mother may still reasonably hope that time will accomplish her most sanguine wishes.

This inauspicious event, joined to the pressure of a war unquestionably originating in her own, or rather in her son's ambition, which threatens to involve the evening of her reign in great disquietude, have added force to the Empress's habitual devotion. She is gloomy, pensive, and frequently in tears. The capital already feels the influence of such a change, which clouds the cheerfulness of society; and will, it is believed, suppress all public testimonies of mirth or amusement. Maria Theresa has indicated her intention to prohibit the *Ridottos* and masked balls customary in the Carnival. No person ventures even to intercede with her in behalf of these pro-

scribed diversions; and unless the Emperor should do so with warmth, there is not any prospect of their taking place during the present winter. His Imperial Majesty, though far less affected than his mother, by the recent disappointment from Paris, is nevertheless much secluded, and constantly occupied in his Cabinet. He comes seldom into company, and is rarely seen at Prince Kaunitz's, or at Prince Coloredo's Drawing Room, as he frequently used to be before the war. It is indeed true, that on the first day of the present month, he dined at Court in public, with the Knights of "the Golden Fleece," of which order he is the chief and sovereign. But this is the only act of state at which he has assisted, or where he has appeared in person since his return from Bohemia.

His indefatigable vigilance and activity carry him notwithstanding, to every place where he conceives that his exertions can be useful or salutary. He neither considers the renunciation of sleep, nor any degree of personal

personal inconvenience, as impediments, when the occasion appears to demand his interference. A few days ago, at seven in the evening, a fire broke out near the palace of Schonbrun, about a mile beyond the extremity of the suburbs on that side, without the lines which surround Vienna. As it raged violently for some time, apprehensions were entertained that the Menagerie of Schonbrun might be endangered by the flames. The night was dark and cold: but no sooner was the Emperor apprized of the circumstance, than he instantly mounted his horse, and galloped to the spot. On his arrival he gave directions for extinguishing the flames, assisted in getting engines for the purpose, and remained there till the conflagration ceased.

These demonstrations of his attention to preserve the tranquillity, and to provide for the safety of the capital, cannot however dissipate the universal gloom occasioned by the war, augmented by the mode in which it has been hitherto conducted. The

tary suspension of hostilities on both sides, though pretty general, conduces little to tranquillize the public mind. Congresses are indeed mentioned as likely to take place in the course of the winter ; but the original cause of quarrel remains entire, while the Austrians continue to occupy Lower Bavaria, and refuse restitution of any part of the sequestered territories. A more serious subject of alarm appears to be arising on the side of Russia, Frederic having found means to interest the Empress in his quarrel, if not as an open auxiliary, yet as a friend. It is well known that she has expressed through her Minister to this Court, Prince Gallitzin, the utmost disapprobation of the conduct of the Cabinet of Vienna in the affair of the Palatine succession. Her interposition, if sincere and strenuous, must be deeply felt and respected by both parties. It is certain that preparations of every kind are making here for an early campaign. So strong was the alarm of a recommencement of hostilities, only a fortnight since, that

measures were taken to act in the field without delay. The departure of the Grand Duke and Duchess of Tuscany for Florence, was settled for the first week in January; and that of the Emperor to join the army in Bohemia, for the second of the same month: but the report is now contradicted. Every day may however, in the present critical situation of affairs, produce some great event, and you shall be informed of any occurrence that arises of moment,

LETTER XXVIII.

*Aspect of the Court,—Military Operations.—
Capture of Habelschwert.—Conduct of the
Empress on that event.—Desertions.—Dis-
content at Vienna.—Preparations for a second
Campaign.*

VIENNA, January 27, 1779.

WE remain still in the same anxious situation, uncertain as to peace or war. The new year opened it is true, with the customary day of Gala, held on the first of January, at which their Imperial Majesties, accompanied by the Archdukes and Duchesses, were all present. But it was long believed that the Empress would not admit of any public entertainments being exhibited during the Carnival; and she actually persisted in her determination upon that point, to the last moment. The interposition and remonstrances of her son
the

the Emperor surmounted however, not without difficulty, her repugnance to these amusements, which are at length allowed to take place in the usual manner. The Emperor himself attended by the Great Duke and Duchess of Tuscany, appeared at one of the masked balls; but except on this single occasion, Vienna has displayed scarcely any marks of festivity, and it is perhaps at present, of all the capitals in Europe, the least chearful.

The severity of the winter has by no means altogether produced a cessation in the operations of war. Frederic, who is retired to Breslaw, where he now resides, does not, it is true, personally conduct these incursions, as they may be termed; their object being principally plunder and contributions. His nephew, the Hereditary Prince of Brunswic, supplies his place, and has made himself master of Troppau and Jagerndorf, the only two remaining districts of Silesia yet unannexed to the Prussian Monarchy. It is apprehended that he
will

will maintain himself there till the opening of the campaign. If however the Austrians have been driven in, or compelled to retreat on that side, they have taken ample vengeance in another quarter, and have obtained a very brilliant advantage over the enemy.

Colonel Palavicini arrived here a few days since, with intelligence of the surprize and capture of Habelschwert. It is a fortified town of considerable strength and importance, situate in the county of Glatz; which is a dismembered portion of Bohemia, reconquered by Maria Theresa during the war of seven years; but, ceded anew to his Prussian Majesty at the peace of Hubertsbourg. The Prince of Hesse Philipstahl, who commanded in the place, together with his whole garrison, are made prisoners of war. Count Kiniski and General Wurmser, to whom the conduct and execution of the attempt was entrusted, have deservedly gained great applause. Having rapidly assembled a body of troops, they
marched

marched during the night, favoured by the darkness; approached the walls in silence soon after daybreak; and instantly placing their scaling ladders, as Landohn did formerly at Glatz and at Schweidnitz, they mounted the ramparts before the enemy was aware of the attempt, or in any manner prepared for their attack. After a feeble defence, Habelschwert fell into their hands. Frederic must be deeply sensible to so unexpected an affront, as well as so serious a disaster; nor is it doubted that he will treat the Prince of Hesse, as he did the unfortunate General Finck, after the memorable affair of Maxen.

The capture of Habelschwert opens one of the passages into Silesia, and may be followed by important consequences, if it is not speedily regained. As it may be denominated the first successful attempt to carry the war into the enemy's dominions since the commencement of hostilities, the intelligence is peculiarly grateful to the Emperor. It has occasioned the warmest demon-

demonstrations of joy throughout Vienna, and has dissipated for an instant the gloom of the Imperial palace. Even Maria Theresa herself, however averse to the present contest, is not insensible to the event. When Palavicini, who arrived with the standards taken from the enemy, was presented to her; she received the news with extraordinary satisfaction, and listened with the utmost complacency, while he related to her all the particulars of the storm and surrender of Habelschwert. Being informed that the inhabitants had suffered considerably by pillage, during the first fury of the troops, her heart was affected. Going to her bureau, she opened it, and took from thence a bag containing five hundred ducats in gold; then putting it into Palavicini's hand, "I desire," said she, "that this sum may be distributed
" in my name to the unfortunate sufferers,
" whose houses or effects have been plundered by my soldiery: it will be of some
" little use, and consolation to them under
" their

“ their misfortune.” So singular an act of liberality and compassion towards the inhabitants of a Prussian town taken in war, has occasioned much astonishment, and has even given rise to a variety of opinions respecting its propriety, as well as its wisdom and policy. There are not wanting persons here who censure her conduct with severity, attribute it to the scruples of a wounded mind conscious of the injustice of the war in which she is engaged, and who consider such munificence as ill bestowed. Without pretending to analyze the secret feelings of the Empress’s breast, it seems nevertheless impossible not to admire the act, or not to do justice to the philanthropy and benevolence of Maria Theresa ; qualities which have uniformly marked her character at every period of her life. Palavicini has been raised from a Colonel, to the rank of Major General.

This fortunate event is not the only one which has taken place within the last few days ;

days ; another very considerable advantage having been gained by a body of Austrians over the enemy, in a skirmish near Zuckmantel in Silesia. A few more such actions would bereave the Prussians in a great degree of that reputation, which constitutes an important part of their military superiority, and would teach the Austrian soldier to regard himself as their equal. Frederic has moreover suffered immensely by desertion, as always happens at the commencement of a war. I heard the Baron de Breteuil, the Ambassador of France, assert only two days ago, that he had himself given passes to more than thirteen thousand French deserters from the Prussia army, the greater part of whom entered Austria from Bohemia, over the bridge across the Danube at Lintz. The Empress has likewise sustained no inconsiderable loss from the same cause ; but yet, far less than her adversary, because her armies are composed principally either of her native subjects, or at least of Germans.

Notwith-

Notwithstanding so many exhilarating circumstances, which seem to presage a prosperous campaign, the Court continues to be gloomy and joyless. The Great Duchess of Tuscany's health, which is very precarious, increases the dejection in the Imperial Palace: she is at this time much indisposed. Prince Kaunitz, who may be considered as a political barometer, appears thoughtful, and has lost his usual good humour. The general officers are known to be all discontented or disgusted. They cannot be ignorant of the secret divisions in the Cabinet, and are well aware how much every operation of war will be weakened or counteracted by the Archduchess Christina's influence over her mother. They do not less deprecate, I believe, the Emperor's presence and interference in the field, which was so pernicious in Bohemia, three Months ago. Even Joseph himself, instructed by experience, or apprehensive of Russian interference, is thought to be no longer averse to pacific propositions.

propositions. It is imagined that overtures to that purpose will be made through the Court of Petersburg, as Prince Repnin is at Breslau with his Prussian Majesty, occupied, we understand, in concerting the preliminaries.

The prospect of peace does not however induce the Austrian Government to intermit their preparations for meeting the approaching campaign. Very heavy taxes have been levied on the people; and proportionate exertions are making to raise a force, capable not only of facing Frederic in the field, but of giving him battle. The Emperor cannot intrench himself a second time in an inaccessible camp, and allow the Prussians to desolate his dominions, without totally breaking the spirit of his troops, which the late fortunate events at Habelschivert and Zuckmantel, have greatly elevated. Three hundred and fifty thousand men, it is asserted, will be under arms in Bohemia and Moravia, before May. So prodigious a strength, properly
11 conducted,

conducted, might enable Maria Theresa and Joseph to carry the war into Saxony or Silesia, and almost to dictate terms at the gates of Breslau, or of Dresden. Frederic, it is certain, cannot, even including his allies, bring into the field more than about two-thirds of the Austrian force. But his name, his cause, and the energy, as well as decision of his councils, may perhaps more than counterbalance the superiority of numbers. The campaign is expected to open betimes, and whenever it begins, the shock must be terrible. We wait here with anxious solicitude for further information relative to peace.

LETTER XXIX.

State of society at Vienna.—Female manners and education.—Disposal of time.—Dress.—Style of beauty.—Severity of the Empress in restraining dissipation. — Superstition. — Men.—Defects of their education.—Literary prohibitions.—Ignorance of the upper ranks.—Opulence of the great Nobility. — Executions. — Police.—Spies.—Bigotry.—Belief in familiar spirits, and in the philosopher's stone. — Laboratories. — Veneration for Paracelsus.—Belief in secrets to prolong life. — Theatrical amusements.—Universality of the French language.—Climate of Vienna.

VIENNA, February 2, 1779.

IT is time to turn our attention from military preparations and levies, to images of another kind ; to the picture of manners, and the description of private life. A residence of two winters in Vienna, added to a personal acquaintance with the far greater part of those who compose its society in the best sense of the term ; enable me to speak with some information on the interior of this metropolis, its pleasures, occupations, and inhabitants. Few European cities offer
more

more resources to a stranger, who does not place his felicity in absolute dissipation. He will not indeed find here the productions of art, or the monuments of antiquity, which are to be seen at Florence, or may be studied at Rome. The circle of elegant pleasures that Paris offers; or the more elevated range of mingled knowledge, business, and recreation afforded by London, are not, it is true, characteristic of Vienna. But the Austrian capital, however limited in its gratifications, may, nevertheless, most usefully, as well as agreeably detain a foreigner; and I shall always, in the review of my past life, esteem the time which I have spent here, among the best employed, as well as most pleasing, which it has been my lot to pass in any country of Europe.

It is not in Vienna, as with us, where a native of France or of Germany, however rich, highly born, or accomplished, may pass not only one, but many winters, in vain endeavours to force his way into the private society of the Great. He is not driven here, as he is in London, or in Paris, to frequent the theatres and public places of

diversion, by way of refuge from dulness. Here a sort of patriarchal simplicity subsists, in the midst of those entertainments or exhibitions which wealth and luxury have introduced. The upper orders seem to constitute only one large family, of whom Maria Theresa is the common parent. The rallying point of pleasure and relaxation at Vienna is found in the highest circles, to which a foreigner is immediately carried. The assemblies of Prince Kaunitz, and of Prince Coloredo, are the first into which every stranger of condition is introduced after his arrival. It is unnecessary to repeat, that the former is Prime Minister and Chancellor of Maria Theresa, as Queen of Hungary and Bohemia; while Prince Coloredo is the Vice-Chancellor of Joseph the Second, in his quality of Emperor of Germany. As the houses of both, which may be said to form a part of the Imperial palace, are open every evening for the reception of company, they constitute a principal source of amusement at Vienna. It is, besides, an attention expected from persons who have been presented to those Ministers,

nisters, that they should frequently be seen of an evening among the crowd in their drawing-rooms. There is not the smallest degree of constraint imposed by the presence of Prince Kaunitz, who is usually engaged at billiards, in a corner of the apartment; and every one is at perfect liberty to amuse himself, either at play, or in conversation, as his inclinations may lead him. Nearly an equal freedom reigns at Prince Coloredo's, who, surrounded by his numerous sons, daughters, and their descendants or connexions, unites to the utmost simplicity of manners, all the politeness of a courtier and a gentleman. Every circumstance conduces to put a foreigner at his ease, and insensibly to divest him of the awkwardness or embarrassment natural on finding himself in the midst of a society, with whose habits and common topics of conversation he is necessarily unacquainted.

It must, nevertheless, be admitted that the Austrian manners are cold and reserved on first acquaintance. There is a certain indolent indifference and listless tranquillity which characterize them, as widely removed

from our national shyness and taciturnity, as they are from the French frivolity, loquacity, and levity. Time, habit, and a quiet, rather than a noisy civility, insensibly surmount this impediment to conversation. The Austrian ladies are by no means deficient in external accomplishments, mental and personal: they are in general elegant, graceful, and pleasing; but they rarely possess, like those of France and England, a cultivated mind. The principal reading of a woman of quality, is unfortunately such as tends to pervert and contract, rather than to enlarge, exalt, and improve her understanding. Holy legends, lives of saints and devotees, masses, and homilies, constitute her chief information. She knows little of Madame de Sevigné, and less of the productions of Racine, Moliere, or Fontenelle. If she has perused the works of Cervantes, of Crebillon, and of Le Sage, she has done much. But, on the other hand, with the writings of Saint Theresa, and the reveries of Saint Catharine of Sienna, she is perfectly familiar.

This want of female improvement is universal, and the necessary result of their confined education. Young women of condition

are all sent to a convent, either at Prague, at Presburg, or at Vienna. There they are taught to sing hymns to the Virgin, and to tell their beads devoutly. Of history, poetry, and polite letters, they imbibe no tincture; and the spirit, if not the precepts of their religion, set bounds to any liberal enquiries, by the detestation that they inspire for heretics, and heretical productions. Women of fashion rarely stir out in a morning, except to hear mass, or on particular occasions. They usually take a cup of coffee or chocolate when they rise; and they either remain afterwards invisible in their own apartments, in a state of the greatest undress, or devote the hours before dinner to the occupation of the toilet. Few of them admit visits from men at that time of the day, which is sacred to indolence, affected to devotion, or reserved for private concerns of a domestic nature. A morning at Vienna is indeed short, as the general hour of dining is still half past two, and was formerly one o'clock; but it has gradually grown later for successive years.

Prince Kaunitz forms the only exception. The afternoons of course are long ; and it is accounted polite to visit, wherever it is known that a numerous company is met, about half past four, just as they are rising from table.

The evening may properly be said to begin about eight, or earlier. Besides the houses of Prince Kaunitz and Coloredo, there are others, in which, during winter, assemblies are held once a week, or more frequently. Among the chief, it would be unjust not to mention that of the French Ambassador; the only member of the " Corps diplomatique," whose establishment enables him to entertain in a style of magnificence. Ices and lemonades are offered to the company, but there is never any supper except by particular invitation. Play is general : Ombre is among the reigning games; Loo, as well as Whist, very common: Taroc, Triflette, Reverse, and Tric Trac, much in vogue. Ladies who do not sit down to cards, frequently have on their lap a little box of old Lac, and employ themselves in untwisting

untwisting gold thread, which by no means prevents conversation, as it only occupies the fingers. The reserve of the Austrian women, so unpleasant on first acquaintance, imperceptibly wears off, and gives place to their natural character. Their conversation, if not improving, is rarely deficient in spirit, vivacity, and animation. But a learned woman, so common with us, is a thing totally unknown at Vienna. I ought in justice likewise to say, that there are some pleasing and shining exceptions to the imputation of ignorance. No capital in Europe can produce persons more distinguished by natural and acquired endowments, or of minds more liberal and enlarged, than the Countess Thun, and the Countess de Pergen : the houses of both are the rendezvous of every person who pretends to refinement, and form the best resource for the English during their stay in this capital.

The women dress well, with great taste, and greater magnificence. I never saw in any Court such a profusion of diamonds, unless,

unless, perhaps, at Lisbon; and they dispose their jewels with no little elegance. During the Carnival they endeavour to make amends for the privations imposed by Lent, which extend not only to the table, but even to the toilet. They have, however, the absurdity common in every kingdom in Europe, except England, of dressing girls at seven and eight years old, like women of sixteen or eighteen, with powder, a high head, a Chignon, and a hoop; which is in fact the secret of rendering them old before they are young. Vienna abounds with beautiful women; but they are not all natives of Austria, or even of Germany. Bohemia, Hungary, Italy, and Poland, of which last country a considerable part is now become subject to Maria Theresa, conspire to adorn the Imperial capital with their respective tribute of beauty. Every circle of the German Empire may claim its share in composing the society of this its common metropolis, as all the cities of Greece contributed towards the Venus of Apelles. The national, or provincial

vincial cast of character is, however, usually preserved, and easy to be distinguished. The women of condition are noble in their deportment, and have a natural air of dignity. I think that in general their persons are on a larger scale than with us, and that there are more fine forms, than pretty figures: their hair and teeth are commonly good, particularly the latter, to which the dryness of the air and climate contribute. If there be room for criticism, it is about the neck. Nature seems to have been lavish of that attribute of beauty, only in Italy and in Greece; while in other European countries she dispenses it with a more sparing hand: there are in Vienna itself many charming exceptions to the remark.

Rouge is universally worn by married and unmarried women of fashion; but they use it in general with moderation, as well as taste: girls of fifteen wear it as much as persons of thirty. The Archduchesses alone are never rouged, the Empress not permitting them to be so on any occasion whatever. After the death of the late
Emperor

Emperor Francis in 1765, rouge was absolutely and universally forbidden by Maria Theresa, on pain of her displeasure; nor did any one dare to use it, even in private companies, on the most select parties. Nothing can more strongly prove the species of maternal power which the Empress exercises over her people, which sometimes assumes a religious, at other times a political, or moral character. They obey with a sort of filial submission, in which respect and attachment are blended; though they murmur and complain at the same moment. It must be confessed, that the authority is very unlimited, which can enforce such a prohibition throughout a whole capital, during a considerable length of time. Peter the Great, despotic as he was, found the obstacles insuperable in many instances, when he attempted to regulate dress and manners among his subjects. Rouge revived gradually and imperceptibly, as the Empress's grief wore off, and her consequent repugnance to the demonstrations of joy or festivity.

If it were possible by severity, as well as example,

example, to banish and eradicate from any city, that intercourse between the sexes which we commonly denominate gallantry, it would have been totally extinguished at Vienna. The Empress, rigidly virtuous in her own conduct, faithful to the marriage bed, and never suspected of female weakness, makes very little allowance for the indiscretions of others. She crushes every degree of libertinism beneath the immediate weight of her displeasure. A woman of condition, if known to be frail, unless her frailty be confined to one lover, and managed with the utmost attention to privacy and decorum, is certain to receive an order to quit Vienna: perhaps she is obliged to languish out life in some obscure provincial town of Hungary, Austria, or other parts of her Imperial Majesty's dominions. Such exercises of supreme authority, however despotic, and in some instances perhaps severe, capricious, or mistaken, yet operate most forcibly to maintain the purity of morals in the capital. It is hardly possible to conceive how minute and circumstantial a detail her inquiries

ries embrace, relative to the private conduct of her subjects of both sexes: their actions, amusements, and pleasures, even the most concealed, are constantly reported to her. She employs emissaries or spies, who omit nothing for her information. I could relate from my own personal knowledge, some curious and entertaining instances of her inspection into the conduct of the Ladies of her Court; but the subject is too delicate for particular details. An illiberal superstition, rather than a rational disapproval of gallantry, on account of the private and political ills which it produces, frequently actuates her in this rigorous proscription.

In no European capital are so much decency, caution, and respect for appearances maintained, in all connexions of pleasure or attachment, as at Vienna. These attentions are indispensable, in order to avoid attracting the Imperial notice, always followed by reprehension or punishment. Gallantries here are covered with a mysterious veil, and assume the exterior of friendship. Unlike the fickle and libertine amours of Warsaw, or
of

of Peterburgh, they generally last for a quarter of a century, and are rarely broken off on either side. Slow in forming, they are still more slow in dissolving. I am inclined to believe, that besides the restraints alluded to, neither the climate nor the air of Austria are favourable to violent passions of any kind. There is something phlegmatic in the constitution of the inhabitants, physical and intellectual, which is adverse to strong emotions. The presence of the Empress, who is always resident in, or near her Capital; and the terror inspired by her vigilance, as well as her resentment, operate in repressing all excesses. Superstition, confessors, and penances, add weight to temporal motives. But the principle of frailty nevertheless exists; even Vienna has its Messalinas, though certainly in smaller number, and marked with fainter colours than elsewhere.

The superstition of an Austrian woman, however characteristic, habitual, and excessive, is by no means inconsistent or incompatible with gallantry: she sins, prays, confesses, and begins anew; but she never
omits

omits her masses, not even for her lover. Few Ladies touch meat either on the Friday or Saturday of every week, or during the whole period of Lent; and they confess frequently; if not from principle, yet from habit or from fear. The marriage ring is seldom worn or kept, as its loss would be ominous in their estimation, and presage misfortune. In order to avoid so great a calamity, they are generally sent to a celebrated chapel of the Virgin, at Maria Zell in Styria; a shrine where I am assured there are more gold rings, than the Carthaginian General found on the field of Cannæ. Very little of the exterior of devotion is nevertheless visible among women of condition: it interrupts no pleasures of society or conversation; it neither mixes with their discourse, nor tinges their manners: they reserve it for the altar, or the confessor. I ought likewise to add, that there are not a few who entertain much more liberal and expanded ideas of the Deity and of Religion, than the Catholic Faith usually inspires, particularly at Vienna.

After

After considering the softer sex, in speaking of the men, it is just to make a leading distinction. The Austrian youth of rank or condition are in general insupportable. Distinguished only by pride, ignorance, and illiberality; regarding themselves as superior to every other European nation, because their sovereign is titular head of the German Empire; altogether destitute of improvement, commonly haughty and assuming; they want equally the inclination and the requisites to be agreeable in society. It is true, that like us, they commonly travel; that is from Vienna to Paris, through Italy, and home. They imitate the French manners; but possess neither the urbanity, the vivacity, nor the elegant levity of France. Though coxcombs, they are not amusing ones, and in cultivation of mind they are totally deficient. The universities and seminaries of instruction, throughout the Austrian dominions, are scarcely more calculated to form, or to enlarge the understanding, than the nunneries where the other sex are educated. An ecclesiastic is usually selected for the purpose,

whose cares are principally limited to the morals of his pupils. Temperate in their appetites and pleasures, the youth of Vienna appear to me by no means to merit the imputation affixed on the Germans, of a fondness for wine.

It is among men of riper years, in every department civil or military, that are found polished manners, urbanity, and attention to strangers. In solid endowments of understanding, in local information, and in all the branches of official knowledge which qualify for filling offices of state or trust with honour and ability; they may vie with the nobility of any country in Europe. But I am inclined to believe, that fewer persons of extensive reading and information are found among them, proportion observed, than in any of the German Courts. To the injudicious bigotry of the Empress, may chiefly be attributed the deficiency. It is hardly credible how many books and productions of every species, and in every language, are proscribed by her. Not only Voltaire and Rousseau are included in the list, from the
supposed

supposed immoral tendency, or licentious nature of their writings; but many authors whom we consider as unexceptionable or harmless, experience a similar treatment. A sentence reflecting on the Catholic religion; a doubt thrown upon the sanctity of some hermit or monk of the middleages; any composition in which the pleasures of love are warmly depicted; for I by no means speak of those licentious writings which it is the duty of every government to suppress;—in a word, any work where superstition is attacked or censured, however slightly, attracts immediate notice, and is instantly prohibited under severe penalties.

The far greater number of those books which constitute the libraries of persons distinguished for taste and refinement, not merely in France or England, but even in Rome or Florence, are rigorously condemned, and their entry into Vienna is attended with no less difficulty than danger. It is indeed true, that notwithstanding every prohibition, knowledge insensibly pierces, and gradually diffuses itself over the Austrian dominions.

regulate their taste, or to introduce them to a familiarity with the great writers of antiquity. It is not on the banks of the Danube, under Princes of the House of Austria, that such works are justly valued or appreciated. Horace, Sallust, Virgil, and Tacitus, have here few readers, and fewer admirers. The hereditary superstition of Leopold and the Ferdinands, which survives in the present Empress, precludes their entrance and reception. It is probable that the death of Maria Theresa, and the accession of Joseph the Second to the Hungarian and Bohemian Crowns, will produce a vast revolution in the human mind. His sentiments on religious subjects, though by no means clearly developed, are known to be more liberal; and they will, it is supposed, operate to throw down the political and moral barriers which for ages have prevented the diffusion of improvement among the various classes of people.

Many of the great nobility here are extremely opulent, and maintain a splendor in their establishments suited to their rank.

They have usually a palace in Vienna, and another in the suburbs, where they alternately reside, according to the season of the year. A piece of magnificence, peculiar, as I believe, to the Imperial Court, is that all the Ministers employed in the principal offices or charges, are lodged at the expence of the Government, in houses or rather suits of apartments belonging to the Empress. Those of Prince Kaunitz are very superb. The range of rooms occupied by Prince Coloredo, as well as those of Count Rosenberg the "Grand Chambellan," constitute part of the vast edifice of the Imperial palace. If, however, they are thus provided with lodgings at the cost of the Crown, on the other hand, it must be owned, that the appointments and salaries of the great officers of state in every department, are, according to our ideas and modes of estimation, not merely narrow, but totally inadequate to sustaining the dignity of their public situations. The Master of the Horse has only four thousand florins a year, which make scarcely four hundred pounds sterling; and the

the "Grand Chambellan" receives no more than twelve hundred florins. All the inferior "Chambellans," who amount to near fifteen hundred, have only the privilege of wearing at their pocket a gold key, the symbol of their function. Every other place in the gift of the Crown, bears nearly the same proportion.

The family of Lichtenstein may be esteemed one of the wealthiest in Vienna. Prince Francis, who is the head of that house possesses, I am assured, an annual income of at least seventy thousand pounds sterling. It is nevertheless thought that prince Esterhazy, with a receipt of only fifty thousand pounds a-year, is in fact a richer man. The reason is that the Lichtenstein estates lie principally in Bohemia, Moravia, and Austrian Silesia, where the taxes are very heavy and oppressive; whereas the lands of Prince Esterhazy are situated almost exclusively in Hungary, where the power of the Crown in levying pecuniary supplies, is confined by charters, privileges, and compacts, which the Hungarians, though eminently loyal, defend

against all encroachment. When at his palace of Esterhazi, about thirty miles from Vienna, where he resides during a great part of the year, the Prince maintains an establishment approaching in every respect to royal ; and he is, I believe, the only subject in Europe, who keeps in pay a regular company of guards. During the time that he passes at Vienna, he lives with far more privacy. Except Prince Kaunitz and Prince Coloredo, there is indeed no person here sits down regularly every day to sixteen or eighteen covers.

If London or Paris offer more variety of intellectual pleasures and enjoyments, Vienna at least abounds in every delicacy for the gratification of the palate, and the indulgence of appetite. Sensuality itself must be satisfied with the tables of the nobility, which are served with great profusion ; Hungary, Moravia, and above all Bohemia, supplying every kind of luxury for the epicure. The Bohemian partridges and pheasants are admitted to be infinitely superior in flavour to those of France or Italy. I dare not relate

relate what I have heard of the quantities of game, large and small, killed, or rather slaughtered, in some of the Bohemian shooting parties. Many hundred head of deer, hares, boar, and all kinds of wild fowl, are massacred by these relentless sportsmen; if such they can with propriety be esteemed, who estimate the diversion only by the multitudes which they destroy, and by the facility of the chase. The Danube, as well as the lakes of Hungary, furnish a variety of fish; and oysters are even brought from the Adriatic, either from Trieste, Fiume, or Venice, as are many kinds of sea fish. Piedmont contributes the largest and the finest truffles that I ever tasted, which preserve all the delicacy of their original flavour, though transported across the Alps. Prince Kaunitz is regularly supplied with them from Turin. In no article do the Austrians display more magnificence or variety than in their wines; and in many houses, as Lady Wortley Montagu remarked sixty years ago, a printed list of them is put under every plate. I have now by me
that

that of Prince Schwartzemberg, as well as that of Cardinal Migazzi, Archbishop of Vienna, and I shall copy the former, as a specimen :

- “ Vin d’Absynthe.
- “ Vin d’Autriche.
- “ Vin de Razersdorf.
- “ Vin de Rhin.
- “ Vin de Moselle.
- “ Vin de Nuitz.
- “ Vin de Champagne.
- “ Vin de Malaga.
- “ Vin de Bacaret.
- “ Vin d’Alicante.
- “ Vin de Balmfec.
- “ Vin de Cerifes.
- “ Vin de Tokay.”

In this list, which includes some of the finest wines of Austria, Hungary, Germany, France, and Spain, an Englishman will however probably remark that neither Port, Claret, nor Madeira are to be found.

Notwithstanding the number and delicacy of their wines, which might naturally tempt to an indulgence, the Austrians, as

I have

I have already observed, are very temperate and moderate in the use of them. I never saw a single instance of a young man of fashion intoxicated, during the whole time that I passed at Vienna. If they commit excesses, they certainly are not those of wine. This remark, however, applies only to the upper classes; the people, like the Germans in general, are more addicted to the use and abuse of strong liquors.

Crimes as well as punishments are rare, owing to the vigilance and severity of the police. A murder is scarcely ever committed, and robberies are so uncommon, that at almost every hour of the day or night, a stranger may walk the streets, or travel the public roads in safety. Of course, executions happen very seldom; but when they take place, they are conducted with admirable propriety, and in a way calculated to produce the strongest effect on the beholder. I had the curiosity, for the first time in my life, to be present at an execution, only a few days ago; which, from the circumstances that attended it, well merits
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a particular description. Many thousand spectators of all conditions were assembled to witness it; and never was any public ceremony performed with so much solemnity and awful decorum. Four men, convicted of robbery, aggravated by circumstances of cruelty and inhumanity, were sentenced to die; not by the halter, as with us, but by the sword of the executioner. They suffered on the Esplanade, without one of the gates of Vienna, upon a circular space or piece of ground walled in, through which a flight of steps conducted to the platform, or summit, which was raised twelve or fourteen feet above the level of the Esplanade. In order to command a better view of it, I got into a cart placed so near, that I could distinguish even the countenances and features of the criminals.

The first of the four malefactors having been seated in a chair that was screwed down into the ground, his arms and body were next tied with cords, in order to prevent him from moving, and his neck was laid bare quite to the shoulders. A bandage being drawn across his eyes, four Augustine monks,

monks, holding a crucifix, approached, and after prayer confessed him. The executioner's assistant then collecting his hair, pulled up his head, to the utmost extent of the neck, with a view to afford a fairer mark. Meanwhile the executioner himself, who was a very respectable man both as to figure and dress, arrived at the spot in a hackney coach. When all the requisite preparations were made, he threw off his cloak, and standing in his white waistcoat, he first displayed in the scabbard, and then unsheathed the instrument of punishment. It was a straight, two-edged sword, of an equal breadth, quite to the point, prodigiously heavy, broad, and sharp as a razor. Coming in flank of the criminal, who was blindfolded, and consequently ignorant of the precise moment of his approach; raising the sword with both hands, he took off the head at a single stroke, with a dexterity and celerity exceeding imagination. The assistant held it up streaming with blood, and then laid it down on the ground; while the decapitated trunk was allowed to remain for some seconds sitting

ting in the chair, the blood spouting up at first to the height of three or four feet in the air. Two men then untied the corpse, and taking it by the legs and shoulders, bore it to a little distance. The head was carried with it, placed beside it, and both were covered with a large mat, which completely concealed the whole apparatus from sight.

Previous to the act of beheading the second culprit, the chair was wiped clean from the blood with which it had been stained; the ropes were washed, and sand was scattered over the place; so that when he was brought up in his turn to suffer, no trace of the preceding execution was visible. About half an hour elapsed between their respective deaths; the last three being beheaded with the same dexterity as the first, and with similar circumstances. The velocity with which the sword passed through the neck, and dismembered the head, was such, that the blade scarcely appeared bloody. After inflicting each stroke, the executioner took out a white handkerchief, and carefully wiped away the globules of blood

blood which stood upon the sword; then sheathed, and laid it down at some paces from the chair, concealed by a cloak. The whole ceremony being ended, he advanced forward, nearly to the edge of the platform or scaffold, and holding up the instrument of justice, immediately after he had taken off the head of the last criminal, he addressed himself to the assembled multitude, demanding whether he had well performed his duty. They signified their approbation, and he then withdrew, in the same hackney coach which had conveyed him thither; while the people, before they dispersed, joined with the monks in prayer for the souls of the departed. The four trunks and heads were exposed during some hours on wheels, to the view of every one, and were afterwards interred.

I retired from this scene deeply impressed with so unusual, as well as solemn a sight, which excites, however, no sensation of horror, and is attended with nothing cruel or repugnant to humanity. On the contrary, human ingenuity and mercy could
not

not perhaps devise a mode of taking away life, at once so lenient and so instantaneous. In fact it is the work of one second only, and cannot possibly be physically felt by the person put to death. The mind, and not the body, feels the stroke, whereas the halter, as we know, does not always deprive of sentiment, or extinguish being for many minutes. Decapitation likewise makes a far more awful and profound impression on the surrounding multitude, who are deeply affected by the sight of the headless trunk, and view every part of the ceremony with other sensations than those of an English mob, assembled to see men carried in a cart to be hanged at Tyburn. Here it excites all those beneficial emotions which check the progress of crime, and retain society within proper limits.

The rapidity and precision with which the act of decapitation itself is performed, constitutes not the least wonderful part of it, and may be compared, in its velocity, to the effect of lightning. No axe could inflict so sure a stroke, however well directed by the
most

most skilful hands, aided by the firmest nerves. It is indeed rare that we read of an executioner thus taking off a head at one blow. The Duke of Monmouth, who suffered under James the Second, was backed to pieces by a terrified, or an unskilful practitioner; and numerous instances of a similar nature occur in our sanguinary annals, under the Tudors and the Stuarts. I have been assured by more than one person here, that the head frequently retains, for three or four minutes, a strong and visible principle of life, after its instantaneous separation from the body; that the tongue and lips will even open and move. We are told that Marshal Biron's head made a bound on the scaffold; a fact asserted by contemporary and grave historians, whose authority it is difficult to reject. I will not venture to say any thing positive on this point, from my own personal observation; but I apprehend that both the head and trunk are capable of strong convulsive spasms or movements, after their being disengaged from each other; particularly where the person

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beheaded is at the time in high bodily health and vigor. The barbarous and absurd custom, common formerly at Vienna, Prague, and all over the German Empire, of catching a glass-full of the criminal's blood at the instant of his being beheaded, which was swallowed warm by persons affected with epileptic disorders; as a certain remedy; is now prohibited, or rather fallen into total contempt and disuse. Reason, aided by the progress of philosophy, has extinguished so abominable, as well as irrational a practice.

It is not merely over the public safety, and the security of the Austrian capital, that the police undertakes to preside. The morals, no less than the conduct of all her subjects, form an object of the Empress's constant and unremitting attention. It approaches on many points to rigor, and may perhaps be justly thought unbecoming her dignity, as well as ineffectual to any salutary purpose. Women who are accused or convicted of devoting themselves, however secretly, to the pleasures of the public, are instantly

instantly taken up by her order, and confined. Many are annually transported down the Danube, into the Bannat of Temeswaer; a marshy and unwholesome province, on the frontier of the Turkish dominions. It is said that the city of Temeswaer is half peopled with ladies of easy virtue and procureesses. I heard the Emperor give a most ludicrous description of one of the latter sort, very celebrated in her profession, whom he had the curiosity to visit in Sclavonia, to which remote country she had been banished by Maria Theresa, for her misdemeanors in Vienna.

Spies form a numerous, expensive, and very obnoxious branch of the state police. No place is free from their intrusion, or exempt from their enquiries. At the theatre, at the Ridottos, and at all public entertainments, there are some of them posted; not merely to protect the persons or the property of the audience, but to prevent likewise the smallest appearance of immodesty or licentiousness. These commissaries report to the Empress every fact worthy her notice, and many which are by no means of a nature to

deserve her attention or interference. Such precautions nevertheless would certainly be very laudable, if they were directed by a rational desire of restraining debauchery, and moderating its pernicious consequences. But it is the progress of age and superstition, which has gradually rendered her austere; and she is actuated rather by the narrow bigotry of an abbess, than by the enlarged and enlightened principles of a sovereign. Yet even her errors are respectable, since they originate in virtue, and her severity unquestionably tends to restrain excesses of every nature.

The Austrians in general are much less free from prejudices, and more attached to superstitious forms or observances, not only than the French or English, but even than the natives of Germany or Italy. Their habitual bigotry is marked in almost every act of ordinary life, or of common intercourse and conversation. They reckon time, for instance, not as we do, from a certain day of one month, to a certain day of another: instead of saying, from the 19th of March to the 31st of June, they count from St. Joseph to St.

St. John: and in order to comprehend their meaning, it is necessary to become acquainted with their Saints, who occupy almost every day in the calendar. As a proof of the ascendant which superstition had, and still has over the inferior classes, it will suffice to mention a well-known fact. The Saints' days were become so numerous, as to affect materially the transactions of commerce, and even to impede the ordinary business of the capital. All the shops being shut on those festivals, the tradesman or the mechanic passed the whole of them in idleness, recreation, debauchery, or devotion.

An evil of such magnitude, which while it impoverished the people, was productive of other pernicious consequences to the State, loudly demanded redress. The Empress applied, therefore, to the late Pope, Ganganelli, for a dispensation from the observance of many of these holidays. He readily granted her request; a considerable number were erased; all further observance of them was forbidden, and the people were commanded, on pain of punishment, to open
T 3 their

their shops, as well as to pursue their respective occupations or trades. They did not venture openly to resist a mandate of the Government, sanctioned by a papal decree: but conceiving it to be no less impious, than it was contrary to the practice of their ancestors, they contrived to elude and to render it fruitless, by refusing to sell any article, or by demanding an exorbitant price for it, upon the days when they were compelled to open their shops. It is only six years ago since the edict took place. Time has however insensibly mollified their intractability, and rendered them more docile: but it will require a long period, to eradicate prejudices which have been imbibed and cherished for successive centuries.

Natural philosophy and science have scarcely made greater progress in Vienna, than sound reason and real religion. The doctrine of familiar spirits, inconceivable as such weakness may appear, has its votaries and believers, even among persons of the highest rank. It is not therefore to be wondered at that men are found, who, profiting of

the weakness and credulity common to human nature, profess to possess the secret of invoking, summoning, and commanding these invisible agents. Princes, Ministers, and General Officers of distinguished reputation, whom it would be easy for me to name, are not ashamed to listen to their pretended discoveries, to be initiated into their mysteries, and to be present at their nocturnal meetings for the purpose of evoking or raising apparitions. Schrepfer would have found as many adherents, and made as many proselytes here, as he did at Dresden. Even the Count de Gabalis himself might here have promulgated his doctrines, without any apprehension from the scepticism, or the incredulity of his audience.

A fact not less incredible, is the eagerness and anxiety with which the philosopher's stone is at this very time sought after here. I should not venture to assert, if I did not know from indisputable authority, that at least three thousand persons are at this time occupied in the research, within the city and suburbs of Vienna. The Austrian Govern-

ment gives the example to the subject, and holds out every necessary encouragement to such as chuse to engage in the attempt. In order to discourage individuals, at the same time, from endeavouring to attain so inestimable a secret as the art of transmuting metals, it is forbidden to carry on chymical processes or operations in private houses. Any person detected in such an occupation, may be seized by the officers of police, and all his apparatus confiscated. But, if he should be disposed to engage in the undertaking, the Government will not only facilitate it; they will even furnish him with the means. Professor Jaquin is empowered by the Empress to receive proposals from such as are inclined to enter on the attempt to make gold; in other words, to find the philosopher's stone. They are immediately provided by him with a room, charcoal, utensils, crucibles, and every requisite, at her Majesty's expence.

The late Emperor Francis, like his predecessor in the Imperial dignity, Rodolph the Second, expended great sums in this chimerical

chimerical search. A person of the highest rank here, himself an adept, assured me that not very many years ago, a man arrived at Vienna, who professed to be in possession of the secret of producing gold. Having made an offer of his services to Francis, he accepted them; but with a view of concealing the transaction from the public eye, the Emperor sent him into Hungary, where he had purchased a house and an estate, named Hol-litsch. Two military officers, chosen for their supposed fidelity, accompanied the projector, with orders very narrowly to watch, and to report upon his conduct. Every thing necessary for carrying on so important a work was liberally provided, and Francis promised him an ample recompense, if he accomplished his promises. The man actually sent some gold to the Emperor, attested to be of his own production or fabrication, but it was only in small quantity. After some time he suddenly disappeared, and the two officers absconded with him. The projector, who has eluded all enquiry, never was heard of since. But the officers,
it

it is asserted, have been seen some time ago, one at Malta, the other at Hamburgh. Francis, instructed, however, by experience, employed no more alchymists to make gold.

Numbers of the first persons in Vienna have laboratories fitted up in their own houses, where they are daily and constantly occupied in the same singular, as well as unprofitable research. Far from being undeceived, or disgusted by ill success, they persevere, and expend no little sums of money in the endeavour. I have been many times in the laboratory of a great adept here, and have seen him employed in the process itself. The room conveyed to me the precise idea of a Necromancer's study, as described in romances; the floor strewed with crucibles, vials, and all the apparatus of alchymy. My attention was particularly attracted by seven lamps, burning under as many large glass bottles or receivers, each filled with a certain powder or dark matter: and he shewed me the particular one, from which he flattered himself that success might ultimately crown his labours. The utmost care
and

and attention are necessary to keep the lamps perpetually alive, like the sacred Flame in the Temple of Vesta, or among the disciples of Zoroaster. Strong charcoal fires are maintained for the purpose; the amusement being by no means among the number of those suited to persons of a narrow fortune.

Some days since, finding myself alone with the nobleman in question, to whose friendship I have great obligations, and who is one of the most pleasing, amiable, and communicative men existing; I asked him what were his notions and opinions relative to the object of his research. I entreated him to inform me, whether it was merely as a recreation that he prosecuted it; or whether he seriously flattered himself with attaining in any degree the philosopher's stone. "I will answer you," said he, "with frankness and precision: The search
"amuses me, awakens hope, animates my
"mind, and presents objects, at least to the
"imagination, of the most seducing kind.
"It is, I grant, expensive, but I am well
"able

“ able to support such a demand, upon my
“ purse. So much for the occupation con-
“ sidered in itself. With respect to the ac-
“ complishment of the great object, the pro-
“ duction of a powder with which gold may
“ be made, I believe in the existence and pos-
“ sibility of such a substance: it is called in
“ the language of Alchymy, *Powder of Pro-*
“ *jection*. If I had an ounce of it, I could
“ produce gold in the following manner;
“ by applying to it a small quantity of gold,
“ the metal is transformed into it; and gold
“ only can produce this effect, or enable
“ me to increase, to any extent that I please,
“ the *Powder of Projection*. If I afterwards
“ apply a small quantity of it so composed,
“ to any baser metals, as lead, iron, or cop-
“ per, I can change them into gold; so that
“ with a small proportion of gold, I can
“ always have powder sufficient to produce
“ an immense quantity. By mixing certain
“ ingredients in it, I can deprive it of its
“ virtue, and revive it at pleasure; but none
“ except myself, or an adept of the same school,
“ can restore it when thus disguised and
“ trans-

“transformed. I believe that many persons,
 “who are no more, have attained, and prac-
 “tised the art of making gold-mony; I believe
 “that there are such persons now existing in
 “Europe; but I am nevertheless very doubt-
 “ful of my own success.” It is unnecessary
 to make any observations on the above ac-
 count of the mode of attaining the philosop-
 her’s stone; since a sort of voluntary credu-
 lity seems to be the principal, and almost
 the only requisite in the process.

The memory of Paracelsus is held in
 high veneration at Vienna: he was one of
 the extraordinary men whom the Emperor
 Rodolph the Second, the great patron of phi-
 losophers, chymists, and pretenders to sci-
 ence, had assembled in his Court at Prague,
 towards the beginning of the last century.
 Paracelsus boldly declared himself in pos-
 session of the secret of the philosopher’s
 stone; and they still shew a house here in
 the Leopoldstadt suburb, where it is said he
 changed a piece of brass money into gold.
 Every body seems to be persuaded of the
 fact; and as a confirmation of it, there is in
 the

the "Belvidere" palace, a picture which I have seen, that represents Paracelsus in the act. I imagine, however, that the evidence of the painting will not be admitted as incontrovertible, beyond the limits of Vienna.

If any degree of positive testimony could establish the doctrine of transmuting metals, it may be obtained here. I have heard persons named, who are either now alive, or lately dead, of whose faculty to make gold, nobody seems to entertain a doubt. A prince of the illustrious family of Lichtenstein, is generally believed to have been master of the secret; by availing himself of which, it is pretended that he laid the foundation of the immense property enjoyed by his descendants: his Christian name was John Adam, and he was great uncle to Prince Francis, the present head of the Lichtenstein family. I am assured that when he came to the succession, his annual income did not exceed thirty thousand florins, or a little more than three thousand pounds sterling. During his life he built several splendid palaces, either at Vienna,
or

or on his various estates; and his manner of living, wherever he resided, was magnificent in the extreme. Yet, notwithstanding these expenses, which were more than sufficient to have exhausted his original patrimony, he left at his decease, lands to the value of above four hundred thousand florins a year. Nay, they add, that such was his command of ready money, in consequence of possessing the philosopher's stone, as to compel the Court to interfere, and to put a stop to his further purchases, or he would have bought almost all Bohemia and Moravia. With whatever contempt such stories might be treated in London, they excite no ridicule here.

The science of making gold is not the only extraordinary or visionary object of research, ardently pursued at Vienna: there are persons here credulous or sanguine enough to believe in the existence of drugs and potions, by which health, vigour, and even life, may be prolonged beyond their usual limits. I have conversed with men who affect to have attained such secrets;
and

and the same nobleman whom I have already mentioned, presented me, not long ago, a vial, containing a bright yellow liquid, which he assured me, taken from time to time in small quantities, would tend to counteract the progress of age, or the effect of indisposition. Unfortunately I want faith for the experiment, without which I imagine it would be of little benefit. St. Germain, who is now said to be alive at Hamburgh, pretends, that by means of chymical discoveries, he has already surmounted the destiny of man, and is above two or three hundred years of age. Impudent as the imposture may be, he would find believers here, even among the higher orders of society. I ought, however, in justice to say, before I quit the subject, that those persons who are most warmly engaged either in the pursuit after the philosopher's stone, or any other visionary attempt connected with it, are still perfectly conscious of the ridicule that attaches to the thing itself. In order to avoid it they usually either conceal their occupation, or affect to join in the laugh

h-s
against

against themselves. The progress of reason and of true philosophy, can nevertheless alone put a total end to pursuits, so generally and so deeply imbibed.

The public diversions, as well as the theatrical amusements of Vienna, do not correspond with the ideas which, as strangers, we are naturally led to entertain of the metropolis of the German Empire, the residence of the modern Cæsars. Few European capitals are more deficient in exhibitions or entertainments of this nature. There is, indeed, a company of French comedians, who commonly repair here every winter; but they are so indifferent, as to render their performance scarcely supportable. It is otherwise at the German theatre, where the representation is excellent. Madame Sacco, who plays the first tragic parts, may rank with the finest actresses of Germany, France, or England. Vienna possesses neither an Italian opera, nor "Ballet;" and during Lent no diversions of a public kind are permitted, except concerts. The masked balls or Ridottos in

Carnival, are held in the Imperial palace ; where the apartments appropriated to them, are noble, spacious, and convenient. I have frequently seen more than eighteen hundred persons in the great ball room. The whole expence being defrayed by the Court, the profits arising from it are appropriated of course to the Government. None of the public amusements are expensive ; the price of admission to the Ridottos is only two florins, or scarcely an English crown piece.

In Lent, it is pleasant on a holiday, to visit " Heren-Haltz," a chapel situated about half a mile to the south of Vienna. Devotion and amusement carry thither multitudes of every rank, and of both sexes. I have met the emperor himself on foot, mixed among the crowd. It is equally curious and entertaining to mingle with the peasants, of whom Sclavonians, Greeks, and Hungarians compose a principal part. They walk, pray, take refreshments, and return in the evening to Vienna. It is accounted a pious work, a sort of pilgrimage, to visit
" Heren-

“Heren-Haltz” in Lent. People of condition either remain in their carriages, or walk, as they chance to prefer; and I have seen ten or twelve thousand persons there of a Sunday, when the weather has been fine.

French may be denominated the common and universal language among persons in upper life at Vienna. German is comparatively little used in mixed company; and the Austrians speak so bad a dialect of it, that a native of Dresden or of Mentz, where the purest German is spoken, has no small difficulty to converse with them. Italian is generally understood, and many of the Milaneze, as well as the Mantuan nobility, are to be found here every winter, whom business, ambition, pleasure, or curiosity, attract to the seat of Government. English is extremely in vogue, particularly among the ladies, most of whom read and understand it: several among them speak it with great ease and propriety. But French is indispensable, and far more useful as well as necessary for a stranger, than German. It was otherwise formerly, under the reigns of

Leopold and Charles the Sixth. Those Princes, nursed in hereditary antipathy to the House of Bourbon, and almost constantly engaged in war with that Family, held in detestation every thing connected with France: language, dress, manners, all were odious. Italian then constituted the elegant and courtly vehicle of expression. French was never pronounced at Court; and it would have been almost a crime to have come into the presence of the Sovereign, in a suit of cloaths of the Parisian mode. I have heard persons assert, who remember the times to which I allude, that any stranger who appeared in the drawing-room with white silk stockings, attracted attention; and that Charles the Sixth commonly said of such a one, looking at him with aversion, "That is a cursed Frenchman!" But the late Emperor Francis brought with him to Vienna the fashions, language, and alliance of that country. As he never could speak German perfectly, he always expressed himself in French. The Court soon followed the example: their

12 animosity

animosity to France was insensibly obliterated; and the connexions of marriage since formed with the various branches of the Bourbon family, have almost completely done away the ancient enmity between the two countries.

The climate of Vienna, as well as of Austria, though dry, keen, and salubrious, is considered as too sharp and penetrating for persons subject to disorders of the lungs. Rain is not frequent. The winters are very rigorous; yet it is rather uncommon for the principal stream of the Danube to be frozen over from side to side. The circumstance did not take place during the whole of last winter; but, about three weeks ago, it was completely frozen across for a few days. I made an excursion into Hungary, at that time; and I not only crossed the Danube on the ice, opposite the city of Presburg, where it is very broad, but I saw waggons heavily laden, which passed with perfect safety. In February and March, unlike our climate, the weather is generally very fine, nor are fogs common

at any season. During summer the heat is frequently oppressive, particularly within the walls of Vienna. A still more-disagreeable attendant on warm weather, is the dust, usually increased by the winds that blow with violence, and which are accounted absolutely necessary in order to preserve the salubrity of the air. The dust is indeed one of the greatest inconveniences to which the city is subject, no precautions being taken to diminish it by watering the streets; and even in February I have found it very unpleasant. But, every advantage fairly balanced, the climate is far superior to that of London, less inconstant and rainy, exempt from the unwholesome fogs so common on the banks of the Thames, and more favourable to the prolongation of health, beauty, and life. Here I shall close this long letter.

LETTER XXX.

Reigns of Leopold, Joseph the First, and Charles the Sixth.—Accession of Maria Theresa.—Her harangue to the Hungarian Diet.—Coronation at Presburgh.—Her person, manners, and conjugal attachment.—Funeral vault of the Imperial Family.—Death of the Archduchess Josepha.—Allotment of the Empress's time.—Her devotion.—Audiences.—Prejudices and partialities.—Palace of Schönbrun.—Archduchesses Maria, Elizabeth, and Christina.—Anecdotes of the last mentioned Princess; her marriage, and ascendancy over the Empress.—Character of Maria Theresa.—Her virtues, talents, and administration.

VIENNA, February 11, 1779.

THE reign of the present Empress Queen comprizes a period the most interesting of any in the annals of the House of Austria, since the death of the Emperor Charles the Fifth. Its duration, which already exceeds eight-and-thirty years; the

critical circumstances under which it commenced ; the wars which, with various success, have marked its progress ; lastly, the vast augmentation of her power and territory, produced by the partition of Poland, added to the recent seizure of Lower Bavaria : all these events conduce to render Maria Theresa an object of peculiar attention, not only as a sovereign, but as an individual. Her character, administration, policy, and actions, which have so essentially affected the felicity, as well as the tranquillity of Europe in the present age, will awaken the warmest curiosity, mixed with the liveliest interest, to the latest posterity.

Her grandfather, Leopold, a prince who experienced the greatest reverses and vicissitudes of fortune, passed his long reign of near half a century, in a perpetual, but unequal conflict, with two powerful states, Turkey and France. Driven from his capital in 1683, by the forces of the former, he owed his preservation solely to the succours brought him by John Sobieski, King of Poland, who saved Vienna, when reduced to the last extremity,

tremity, and prevented Austria from passing under the Ottoman yoke. It was not easy at that time to foresee that Leopold, from a state of such depression, would in the course of a few years become more formidable than ever. The arms of the Duke of Lorrain and Prince Eugene not only recovered Hungary from the Turks, but greatly extended its frontiers; while the genius and fortune of the Duke of Marlborough, by the memorable victory of Blenheim, expelled the French from the heart of Germany, humbled Louis the Fourteenth, and elevated Leopold to the summit of human greatness. He expired almost immediately afterwards, leaving his house in a state of unexpected prosperity, to which he had neither contributed by his talents, by his courage, nor by his exertions of any kind.

Joseph, who succeeded, was a Prince of very different, and of much superior natural endowments. Active in the field, and vigorous in the cabinet, rapid no less than decisive in his political character, he was formed to sustain with ability the fabric
reared

reared under his father. But, the term of his life was short ; and he was carried off by the small-pox, after a reign of only six years, at one of the most critical periods of the great war, undertaken with a view to fix the Crown of Spain on the head of his younger brother, Charles. Joseph's premature death may be said to have produced the peace of Utrecht ; it established Philip the Fifth on the Spanish Throne, and completely changed the destiny of Europe. The present Prince Auerberg, who is four-score, was a page in the service of Joseph, and assisted about his person during that monarch's last illness. Conversing with him on the subject, a few days since, he assured me, that the physicians not only kept the Emperor in a room, from which all circulation or introduction of fresh air was entirely excluded ; but, that they caused him to be wrapt in near twenty yards of English scarlet broad cloth, at the time when the small-pox was at its height. Such was the practice of physic at Vienna, scarcely seventy years ago. Even now the mode of treatment is
little

little better understood, either in Austria, or in Bavaria. Two successive Empresses, and no less than six Archdukes or Duchesses, have fallen victims to the same fatal malady, within the last thirty or forty years.

The brother and successor of Joseph, Charles the Sixth, a Prince of very limited capacity, indolent and passive, resembled Leopold in the leading features of his character: yet, during more than twenty years of his reign, the Austrian dominions continued to increase. Naples, the Milaneze, Mantua, and the Low Countries, which were ceded to Charles by the treaty of Utrecht; Sicily, which he afterwards received in exchange for Sardinia, together with the Kingdom of Servia, a province wrested by his arms from the Turkish Sultans, prodigiously augmented his power. At the Peace of Peterwaradin, in 1716, he might be ranked among the greatest, as well as the most fortunate Monarchs in Europe. But, the evening of his life did not correspond with the splendor and prosperity of its meridian. Prince Eugene, who contributed so much

to

to illustrate it by his victories, had the misfortune to survive himself. Naples and Sicily were lost on one hand ; while on the other, the Turks, emboldened by the weakness of the Emperor's councils, expelled the Austrians from Servia, recovered Belgrade, defeated the Imperial commanders, and seemed to be on the point of again over-running Hungary ; as they had done under the Solymans and the Selims, in the preceding century. Amidst these humiliating and disastrous circumstances, Charles expired, of a disorder produced by eating a dish of mushrooms : leaving behind him no male issue, a beaten and dispirited army, an empty exchequer, and a feeble guarantee purchased or extorted from foreign powers, as the best support to the tottering grandeur of his family, assailed by enemies on every side.

During the life of the Emperor Joseph, as that Prince was destitute of sons, and the only hope of perpetuating the Austrian line centred in the Archduke Charles ; his marriage constituted an object of the first political

political importance. Among all the Princesses of Germany distinguished for beauty, who seemed to give the fairest promise of posterity, Elizabeth Christina, daughter of Louis Duke of Brunswic Blankenberg, was selected. But, as Charles was then in Spain, contending for the Crown of that kingdom, at the head of an army composed of Germans and English; the young Princess was sent thither, and the nuptials were solemnized, in 1707, at Barcelona. When he quitted Catalonia, about four years afterwards, on the death of his brother Joseph, to repair to Germany; she remained behind, till circumstances enabled her to rejoin him at Vienna. Her personal attractions, which raised her to the Imperial Throne, had already suffered some diminution, before her first interview with the Archduke. I have heard the Countess Uhlfeldt say, who remembered her, that previous to her landing at Barcelona, she was so stung by the Mufketos, as to occasion a violent swelling in her face. With a view to diminish the effects of so mortifying an accident, by which
her

her features were entirely disfigured, a lotion was prescribed, that produced indeed the effect of allaying the inflammation; but destroyed the exquisite delicacy of her complexion, which she never recovered to the end of her life.

The mild virtues of her mind and character, added to the charms of her person, effectually secured the esteem, while they conciliated no less the affections of her husband. She survived him near ten years, and was a witness of the political storms which agitated the commencement of her daughter's reign. Towards the latter part of her life, the late Empress was attacked with dropical symptoms in her legs and extremities, which incapacitated her for walking. Whenever she appeared in the drawing-room, it became necessary to place napkins under her feet, to receive the water that ran from them in great quantity. Maria Theresa inherits, with many of her mother's amiable qualities, this corporal ailment, which seems to be constitutional, and naturally augments with the progress of age. After giving birth to various

ous

ous children of both sexes, of whom only two daughters survived, the late Empress brought into the world a son. His birth, which happened in 1718, was celebrated with testimonies of universal joy, as an earnest of the prolongation of the Austrian male line. But these premature hopes were almost as soon extinguished, the young Prince being carried off in the same year: an event which was occasioned, if we may credit Lady Wortley Montagu, by imprudently weaning him. His decease opened the succession to his sister Maria Theresa, who, while yet in infancy, began to be considered as probably sole heiress to the vast dominions of the House of Austria.

She was born in May 1717, and might justly be regarded as one of the greatest alliances which had ever presented itself to ambition. Since Mary of Burgundy, daughter of Charles the Bold, who brought the seventeen provinces of the Low Countries in dowry to the Emperor Maximilian, none so great had arisen in modern Europe. After long hesitation, Charles the Sixth selected

lected for her husband Francis of Lorrain, Grand Duke of Tuscany, a Prince whose similarity of age, added to his personal qualities and accomplishments, rendered him worthy of so distinguished a choice. By a fortunate concurrence of circumstances, he was not less acceptable to the young Archduchess, than to her father; and the marriage was celebrated at Vienna with extraordinary magnificence, on the first of February, 1736. The ruinous war against the Turks, which covered with dishonour the last years of Charles's reign, and embittered the evening of his life, followed shortly afterwards. It was at this time that Maria Theresa accompanied the Grand Duke her husband to Florence, after the decease of the last Prince of the family of Medicis. She returned from thence to Vienna, where she was present at the important moment of the Emperor's death, on the 20th of October, 1740.

Never, perhaps, did any Princess ascend a Throne under circumstances of greater peril, or which demanded more fortitude, energy, and

and personal resolution. Surrounded with enemies, destitute of allies, and attacked by the most powerful adversaries; it was long doubtful whether she would not be buried under the ruins of the House of Austria. While Frederic King of Prussia unexpectedly marched into Silesia, which he reduced; the French and Bavarians appeared at the gates of Vienna. It is difficult to imagine a more interesting object, than the representative and heiress of so many Emperors, contending for the vast succession devolved to her, and finding resources in the firmness of her own character. Even the circumstances of her sex, youth, beauty, and misfortunes, contributed to increase the general interest taken in her fate. Driven from her capital, she retired into Hungary, where, from the loyalty of a martial and generous people, she derived the most solid, as well as effectual support. It was then that she made the celebrated harangue commemorated by Voltaire, which operated so powerfully on the hearts of her audience, and

which is still remembered here with enthusiastic pleasure.

I have conversed with many persons of the highest quality, who were present on that occasion: I never saw any who could mention it without emotion; and all agree in asserting, that the scene was the most touching to be conceived. It was not the cold disclosure of political or pecuniary embarrassments, formally made by a Sovereign from the Throne, and followed by the demand of supplies for carrying on a war. It was the supplication of a young and beautiful woman in distress, who, as her last refuge, in the midst of foreign invasion, threw herself on the affections of a nation, that had experienced from her ancestors, and even from her immediate predecessors, the severest treatment. Hungary, under Leopold and Joseph the First, presented a frightful picture of perpetual insurrections, as perpetually repressed by executions, and by the utmost severity of vindictive despotism. Count Koller, who is himself a Hungarian, and who then represented one of the first officers

officers of State, has frequently related to me every circumstance that attended Maria Theresa's harangue. His own words will convey the most lively, as well as the most faithful picture of a scene, than which antiquity furnishes nothing more sublime and affecting. In the hands of Livy or of Tacitus, how beautiful would have been its effect, and how wide its operation, increased by the lapse of time, which magnifies every object!

"While the Hungarian Diet," said Count Koller, "which had been convoked at
"Presburg, was occupied in preparing
"for the defence of the kingdom and of
"the young Queen, we received a message
"from her Majesty, summoning us to attend her at the Castle. We immediately
"obeyed; and when we were met in the
"great hall, the Queen entered. She was
"dressed in deep mourning, the year not
"being quite expired since the decease of
"Charles the Sixth her father. A profound and awful silence of some moments
"ensued; her Majesty being in distress,
"which she could not conceal, and which

“ incapacitated her from uttering a single
 “ word. During this time her infant son,
 “ the present Emperor, was brought in by
 “ the first Lady of the Bedchamber, and
 “ laid on a cushion before her. With an
 “ action more eloquent than any oration,
 “ she took him in her arms, held him up to
 “ the assembly, and while sobs interrupted
 “ her voice, she addressed the Diet in Latin,
 “ as is customary; a language which she
 “ speaks as well as understands perfectly.
 “ When she came to the words, ‘ *Agitur de*
 “ *Regno Hungariæ, de persona nostra, pro-*
 “ *libus nostris, et corona. Ab omnibus*
 “ *derelicti, unicé ad inclytorum statuum*
 “ *fidelitatem, arma, et Hungarorum pris-*
 “ *cam virtutem confugimus**;’ we all, as if
 “ animated by one soul, drew our sabres,
 “ exclaiming unanimously, ‘ *Vitam et san-*
 “ *guinem, pro majestate vestra†!*’ We

* “ The kingdom of Hungary, our person, our off-
 “ spring, and our crown, are at stake! Abandoned by
 “ all, we fly to the fidelity, the arms, and the pristine
 “ virtue of the famous Hungarian States.”

† “ Our lives and our blood for your Majesty!”

“ wept,

“ wept, as did the Queen aloud ; but they
“ were tears of loyalty, of affection, and of
“ indignation. In a few minutes after-
“ wards we withdrew, in order to pursue the
“ measures necessary for securing the Hun-
“ garian and Austrian dominions, at such a
“ moment of public danger and distress.
“ The Emperor Francis was not present ;
“ but he remained in a room adjoining,
“ from which he could distinctly hear every
“ thing that took place. From the begin-
“ ning to the close, this celebrated scene,
“ which has furnished so much matter for
“ history, hardly lasted more than twelve
“ or fifteen minutes.”

Maria Theresa, it must be remembered, had previously gained the affections, and secured the allegiance of the Hungarian nation, by voluntarily submitting to take the coronation oath of Andrew the Second, which ratified, in terms the most unlimited, all their privileges. After a concession, at once so wise and so magnanimous, she was solemnly crowned Queen of Hungary at Presburg, in June 1741. I am assured by

those who witnessed the ceremony of her coronation, that she was then one of the most charming women in Europe ; her figure elegant, her shape fine, and her demeanour altogether majestic. Every portrait of her which I have seen, confirms the assertion. Though her eyes were of a light grey, they were very expressive, and full of sweetness. An air of delicacy, occasioned by her having recently lain in, increased her natural attractions. When the Hungarian Crown was placed upon her head, it proved to be so much too large, that it was found necessary to put cushions round her forehead, in order to prevent it from falling down over her face. Its weight becoming insupportable after some time, when she sat down to dinner in public, the Crown was taken off. The heat of the weather; and the length of the ceremony through which she had passed, diffused a glow over her countenance that augmented her beauty ; while her fine hair hung down over her shoulders in ringlets, and her whole figure was captivating to the greatest degree. We must not forget these
little

little personal circumstances, when we contemplate the enthusiasm of loyalty, with which she found means to inspire her subjects. It may indeed justly be doubted whether Elizabeth herself ever awakened more attachment among the English, at any period of her life or reign.

Maria Theresa's person now retains no trace of the charms which she once possessed ; and it is even difficult to conceive from her present aspect and appearance, that she ever was handsome. So total a change ought not however, to surprize, when it is recollected that besides her advanced time of life, and the number of children whom she has brought into the world, the small-pox completed the ruin of her features. She caught that cruel distemper from visiting her daughter-in-law, the present Emperor's second wife, twelve years ago, in 1767 ; and during her illness, Maria Theresa's life was in the most imminent danger. Previous to that period, I am assured that she still might have been termed handsome, though she was become large and heavy. In addition to the ravage

made in her face by the small-pox, an accident which happened subsequent to her recovery, totally altered her cast of countenance, and obliterated whatever remained of her former self. Being on a journey from Vienna to Presburg, she was overturned from an open carriage. In the fall she bruised her nose and face so violently, that the swelling and inflammation, occasioned by it, threatened at first to deprive her of sight. The care and skill of her medical attendants prevented that disaster; but the loose gravel upon which she fell, so disfigured her features, that they are no longer recognizable.

The Empress Queen is now grown corpulent, unwieldy, and infirm. Her face, though lacerated by the marks of the small-pox, encreased by the effects of her fall, retains nevertheless such an expression of goodness and benevolence, that when she smiles, her features for an instant almost become pleasing. She owes no advantages to the decoration of the toilet, her hair being combed back very flat under her cap, on the crown of her head; and behind, it is cut short on

her neck. In order to conceal its being grey, she always wears powder. Every thing about her person is dark and mournful; nor has she ever, since the death of her husband, the late Emperor, worn any dress except the deepest weeds. A black crape cap, which comes very low over her forehead, so as almost to conceal her hair, is little calculated to adorn, or to set off her face. On no occasion whatever has she put on diamonds, or other female ornaments, since she became a widow. Her legs and feet, like those of her mother, being grown feeble, and almost debilitated, she is no longer capable of taking any considerable exercise on foot; and she usually wears gaiters about her legs, on account of the support which they give her when walking. In the Drawing-room she uses a glass, in order to distinguish persons at a few paces distant from her. She is in fact very shortsighted; or rather perhaps, age and infirmities having impaired her sense of seeing, oblige her to have recourse to artificial assistance.

When

When young, Maria Thérèse was exceedingly fond of dancing, masking; and every public diversion: but it is almost unnecessary to say, that she has long renounced all such amusements. I have frequently seen her sit down to cards in her drawing-room, on public days; and at the Court balls she usually remains till about eleven o'clock at night, seated as a spectatress of the dances: but, she always retires before midnight; and in her own apartments she never plays at cards, or at any other game. In commemoration likewise of her widowed state, as a sort of austerity which may mark her grief for the loss of a husband whom she tenderly loved, she has never inhabited since his decease, the principal range of apartments in the palace at Vienna. Those in which she constantly lives, have a southern exposition; but, she is so little susceptible of cold, that in the midst of winter she usually keeps all the windows open during the day, and often cannot bear a fire in her chamber. The Emperor, on the contrary, is so chilly, that he says he is almost frozen when he goes to
visit

visit his mother; and he is obliged to put on a fur coat, in order to enable himself to support, for any length of time, the air of her apartment. Her residence is on the third floor of the Palace; and the rooms which she occupies, though commodious and spacious, are nothing less than splendid.

Antiquity does not furnish any model of conjugal affection and fidelity more perfect than the one exhibited by the Empress Queen. Like the elder Agrippina, she presses to her heart the urn that contains the ashes of her husband; and time, which has softened, cannot obliterate her grief. Francis died suddenly on the 18th of August 1765, without previously confessing to a Priest, or receiving absolution. Unless prevented by indisposition, Maria Theresa never fails to repair on the eighteenth day of every month, very early in the morning, to the vault of the convent of the Capucins in Vienna, where his remains are deposited. Even in winter, she is there long before dawn, notwithstanding the rigor of the season, and her many infirmities. The vault is lighted up, while
on

on her knees she pours out supplications for the repose of his soul. The whole month of August she considers as a penitential time, dedicated to his memory ; and she generally passes it at the palace of Schonbrun, in a sort of gloomy and devout retirement, amidst masses, Requiems, and services for the dead. However deeply tinctured with human weakness and superstition, it is impossible not to respect the source, and to honour the principles, which inspire so exemplary a conduct.

Having mentioned the vault of the Capucins, where the late Emperor is buried, it is indispensable for many reasons, that I should endeavour to give an accurate idea of that funereal repository. Louis the Fourteenth is said to have abandoned the Palace of St. Germain, among other reasons, because from the windows he beheld the Abbey of St. Denis, where he was one day to repose after death. As if the Princes of the House of Austria, on the contrary, wished to have mortality constantly before their eyes, and present to their imagination; the
vault

vault in which they are interred, is situated near the Imperial Palace, almost in the centre of Vienna; under the church of the Capucins, which was finished in 1622, by the Emperor Ferdinand the Second. I have visited this place more than once, not without sensations of a solemn and melancholy kind. The vault, or rather subterranean chamber, is of considerable size; the light being admitted into it, though in most parts very imperfectly. All the Emperors, Empreſſes, and their male as well as female iſſue, for more than a century paſt, are there ranged ſide by ſide. Among them I particularly remarked the monuments of Leopold, Joſeph the Firſt, and Charles the Sixth, which are magnificent. Near the laſt mentioned one, is buried the young Archduke, Maria Thereſa's brother, whom I have already mentioned, and whoſe premature death was a ſubject of general lamentation. The inſcription upon the tomb of Eleanor of Neubourg, third wife of the Emperor Leopold, which contrasts not a little with the panegyrics commonly inſcribed to ſovereigns, was dictated by herſelf.

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It is such as a Carmelite, or a Magdalen, oppressed with a consciousness of her sins, might have chosen to be engraved upon her tomb-stone; and I copied it for its humility, as well as for the religious cast of expression:

“ Eleonore,
 “ Pauvre Pechereffe!
 “ morte le 19 Janvier,
 “ 1719.”

She forbade any other commemoration or eulogium to be added.

The monument, erected to the late Emperor Francis and Maria Theresa, is not composed of marble, but of a species of bronze or metal; having been constructed by the present Empress's directions, as long ago as the year 1743, when she was not six-and-twenty. Here she has destined her remains to be deposited with those of her husband, whenever Providence shall call her hence; a period to which she has always looked forward, not merely without terror or repugnance, but with a degree of complacency. Unlike the generality of tombs, where

where the persons whom they commemorate, are commonly laid recumbent, their hands joined in prayer; here the two figures of the Emperor and Empress are represented in a half-reposing attitude. Francis, partly raised on one side, seems regarding his wife with an expression of fondness, while the Genius of immortality crowns them with a wreath. Unfortunately, this monument, intended by Maria Theresa only to excite images of the most solemn and melancholy kind; by some perversity of human nature, or by some original vice of the design itself, awakens ideas the most remote from dissolution and mortality. The posture of the Emperor, which, it must be owned is a little equivocal; the tenderness displayed in the looks of both the figures; added to the warm attachment which, it is well known, her Majesty always felt for Francis, who was then young and handsome; these circumstances have given rise to many ludicrous or sarcastic remarks upon the tomb itself. Persons who are disposed to see the ridiculous, rather than the serious side of every

every object, have thought, not altogether without reason, that it bore more resemblance to a nuptial couch where the lovers are crowned by Hymen, than to the gloomy solemnity of a Mausoleum, destined to contain the ashes of the dead.

Round this singular monument, ranged in funeral pomp, repose the two wives of Joseph the Second, together with the various Archdukes and Duchesses, who have been successively carried off by death, during the course of the present reign. At a little distance, in an obscure recess, stands an altar and a crucifix, at the feet of which Maria Theresa, like another Penitent, is accustomed to implore the divine forgiveness for the offences of her husband and her ancestors. On the anniversaries of her father's and mother's decease, as well as on various others, she rarely fails to descend into the vault, and there to pass a considerable time in prayer. Not content with offering up her own supplications to Heaven, she used frequently to compel her daughters to accompany her thither, and to join with her in religious exercises.

cises. Her injudicious piety was, it is too much to be feared, the cause of one of the most tragical events which has ever taken place among the individuals of the Imperial family: I mean, the death of the Archduchess Josepha. Her story, though short, will excite no less attention, than it awakens concern and compassion.

She was the sixth daughter of the Empress, born in March 1751. Nature had conferred on her a person uncommonly beautiful; and its effect was increased by the sweetness of her manners, which rendered her universally beloved. Her elder sister, the Archduchess Jane, had been demanded by the present King of Spain, Charles the Third, in marriage for his son Ferdinand the Fourth, King of the two Sicilies. That Princess having been carried off by death, the Archduchess Josepha was therefore destined to supply her place, as future Queen of Naples. All the preparations for her journey thither were made; she was publicly betrothed on the eighth of September 1767; and the day of her

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departure for the capital of her new dominions, being fixed for the fifteenth of the following month, she was already treated as a crowned head. But, Providence had decreed that the marriage should never be accomplished, and that she should follow her sister to the grave.

During the interval between her espousals and the time named for her quitting Vienna, her mother, anxious that the Princess should perform her devotions for the last time among the tombs of her relations, before she left Austria to go to Italy, insisted on her visiting the vault in the convent of the Capucins. The young Queen expressed great repugnance to the melancholy ceremony; but, the Empress persisted in obliging her to submit to it. In vain the Princess implored to be excused, alledging a terror and a dread that she could not surmount: Maria Theresa, inflexible, rejected all her intreaties. It is generally asserted that she burst into tears, when she entered the coach that was to conduct her to the convent; and that while in the vault, engaged at prayer, she

she was seized with a shivering. Whether there be any exaggeration in these circumstances or not, it is certain that she sickened almost immediately on her return home to the palace. The small-pox made its appearance soon afterwards; a disorder which has been peculiarly fatal to the Austrian family; and notwithstanding every medical assistance, she expired on the fifteenth of October 1767, the precise day destined for her departure to Naples.

Many comments, as well as reflections, were made on so melancholy a catastrophe; and the Empress was universally censured for having compelled the reluctant Princess to visit a vault filled with dead bodies. But, another circumstance increased the apprehension, while it strengthened the belief, that her death might be too justly attributed to that visit. It was recollected that scarcely four months had elapsed, and those months the hottest of the whole year, since the Empress Maria Josepha, second wife of the present Emperor, had been buried in the same vault. The fact was well known, that

the small-pox of which the Empress died, was of a nature so extremely malignant, as to render it totally impossible to embalm her body. Many persons did not hesitate to declare, that notwithstanding all the precautions taken, the smell of her corpse was perceptible, and even capable of communicating infection. In every case, the imprudence of the Empress Queen's conduct was incontrovertible. The Archduchess's death filled the palace with consternation; and the amiable qualities by which she was distinguished, added to the general affliction. Her brother the present Emperor, who loved her with predilection, attended her during the whole progress of her disorder, and never quitted her till she breathed her last in his arms.

The decease of two Archduchesses who were destined in turn to be Queens of Naples, together with the singular and disastrous circumstances attending the last, almost induced Maria Theresa to think of declining so inauspicious an alliance. It must be confessed that even in a less superstitious Court, such events might be regarded as
ominous

ominous or sinister. After some irresolution, it was nevertheless determined to name the next of the Archduchesses in order of birth, Maria Caroline, to supply the vacant place. But, the young Princess, little more than fifteen years of age, terrified at the recent death of her two sisters, expressed the greatest repugnance to espouse a Prince, whose alliance seemed to be fatal to the Austrian family. The Empress her mother's firmness, sustained by Prince Kaunitz's reasons and exhortations, surmounted, however, her opposition. In March 1768, she was sent to Naples; the *first* matrimonial pledge given to the House of Bourbon, on the part of Austria. Her sister Maria Amelia, who espoused the Duke of Parma in 1769, was the *second*. The *third* and last was the Archduchess Maria Antonietta, married to the present King of France in 1770. Three daughters, successively conferred on three princes of the family of Bourbon, may well be considered as a powerful cement between the two Crowns and countries. It was in a peculiar manner the work of the present

prime minister, prince Kaunitz; and it is the measure from which he claims the greatest political merit.

I return from this digression, to give a detail of the Empress Queen's life, the disposition of her time, and her ordinary occupations. Pleasures, in the common acceptation of the term, she can scarcely be said to allow herself any. She rises generally at a very early hour; during summer at five, and even in January, at six in the morning. After her private devotion, she hears a mass, and proceeds immediately to dispatch business. Her constant breakfast is milk-coffee. At noon she hears a second mass, and then her dinner is served, which by no means consists of many dishes. Parsimonious of her time, she usually dines alone, and instantly resumes the consideration of public affairs. During the summer, when she is mostly at the palace of Schonbrun in the vicinity of Vienna; if the weather permit, she frequently passes several hours in a covered walk in the gardens, to which she can repair from her own apartments. The walk is on
a level

a level with her chamber, in order to facilitate her passage to it. A sentinel, stationed at the entrance, prevents all interruption; and the Empress has a little box, which is buckled round her waist, full of papers, letters, and memorials. She peruses them all, remains four or five hours at a time in this employment, marks such as appear to deserve attention, and enters into the minutest detail upon every point. So wholly is she occupied with concerns of state, that it frequently happens, the Archduchesses her daughters, though they reside in the same palace, cannot procure a moment's access to her, from the hour of her getting up till evening. At six o'clock the Empress finishes her application to business, and hears Benediction: a ceremony of devotion at which she expects her daughters to be present. If they absent themselves, she does not fail to express her disapprobation. She even sends to enquire if they are indisposed; and sometimes reprimands them with maternal authority, when she meets them next day: but, since the death of the Archduchess Josepha,

she no longer permits them to accompany her in her visits to the vault of the imperial family. Between eight and half past, she commonly retires to bed. This is the exact relation of an ordinary day, as it is passed by Maria Theresa.

For the purpose of her commodiously hearing mass, as she cannot walk to any distance, or move up and down stairs without difficulty, on account of the debility of her legs, the floor of her bed-chamber opens. A chapel is prepared below, on the *second* story, and she remains in her own room on the *third*, while mass is performed beneath. I have been assured by ladies of the Court, who from their rank and functions could not mistake, or be liable to speak ignorantly, that she is generally occupied more than five hours every day, in acts of religion, and in prayer. Incredible as such a fact may appear, it is indisputably true; and her superstition naturally strengthens with the progress of age. In March last year, I well remember her being for three hours, from three o'clock till six in the afternoon, on her knees,

knees, in the cathedral of Vienna; imploring the divine interposition to turn aside the war, with which she was menaced on account of the Bavarian succession. The Archduchess Elizabeth assured a lady not long since, that "when she accompanied her mother to chapel, she frequently remained there for such a length of time, as scarcely to know at last what she pronounced or repeated." During Lent, the Empress practises all the rigor of Catholic mortification and abstinence. No Carmelite can be more strict in the article of fasting, as well as in refraining from prohibited dishes; and the Archduchesses are compelled to observe the same renunciations. Even at the Emperor's table, I am assured that meat is rarely served. In the holy week, the Empress hears several masses every morning, and passes half the day in exercises of devotion. It is to be regretted that her piety should thus degenerate into superstition, and that the enlightened or benevolent Sovereign should be almost sunk in the Devotee.

Notwithstanding the time which she thus sacrifices

being corrupted by the contagious society of London, and of his losing all his religious principles or impressions, was the motive of this prohibition. She exacted a similar promise from the Emperor himself, when he went to Paris two years ago. "The English," said she to him, "are almost all Deists, Infidels, and Free-thinkers. I tremble, lest an intercourse with such a nation should contaminate your manners, and shake your belief in every thing sacred among Catholics."

Maria Theresa, it is believed, entertains on the contrary, a degree of partiality for the French nation. The political alliance, contracted between her and Louis the Fifteenth in 1756; joined to the marriage of her three daughters, particularly that of the youngest with the present King of France; have obliterated the sentiments of enmity in which she was educated; towards the French. It must likewise be remembered, that her husband the late Emperor Francis, was the son of a French Princess, and that he was himself warmly attached to that

that country. If the Empress herself has however imbibed or adopted these predilections, neither her Courtiers nor her subjects at large participate in them. The inferior classes of people retain all their ancient detestation for the French. It seems to be insurmountable, and manifests itself on a thousand occasions.

Her Imperial Majesty commonly passes the whole summer, and great part of the autumn, at the palace of Schonbrun. She quits Vienna about the beginning of May, and returns to it again before the close of October. In periods of public tranquillity, when her mind is unruffled and cheerful, she is accustomed to visit the palace of Luxembourg, which is about four leagues distant, and to pass a month there: but during the last summer, while her two sons, the Emperor, and the Archduke Maximilian, were absent in Bohemia, and her armies were contending in the field, she remained altogether at Schonbrun, in gloomy dejection. The palace itself is situated scarcely more than half a mile beyond the suburbs, to the south;

south; Joseph the First, who began to build there, having only intended it for a little hunting-seat. His successor, Charles the Sixth, constructed a larger edifice, which was farther augmented and embellished by the late Emperor Francis, who passionately liked the place, and expended considerable sums in beautifying or adorning Schönbrun. The Empress is not less attached to it; and as her husband was, while living, inexpressibly dear to her, his partiality is probably not the least of her motives for preferring it as a residence.

The word Schönbrun signifies "Belle Source," and derives its name from a spring near the palace, in the gardens, the water of which is accounted admirable. The Empress never drinks of any other; and every day during the whole winter, while she is in town, a mule comes from Schönbrun, loaded with water for her table. No position can be more destitute of natural advantages, a hill rising before, and another behind, from each of which is beheld a charming prospect; while on the contrary, scarcely
any

any objects are to be seen from the palace, which stands in a valley. The gardens occupy a vast space, ornamented with water-works, obelisks, a Menagerie, and every embellishment of art: but they are damp, the cellars of the palace lying below the bed of the little river Wien, which runs in front. The edifice is large, the apartments splendid, and maintained at a great expence; Maria Theresa laying out every year, many thousand florins in repairs or additions. But, as the present Emperor her son, makes no secret of his dislike to the situation, which is besides too near the capital; it is not improbable that after her death Schonbrun will be abandoned, and perhaps may be converted by Joseph the Second into barracks for the soldiery.

The fecundity of Maria Theresa would not have been passed over in silence by Tacitus, in the delineation of her character and qualities. Those who have beheld the late Emperor, his wife, and thirteen children of both sexes, seated at table on public occasions, assure me that it was one of the
most

most interesting and pleasing spectacles ever contemplated. Several of the Archduchesses were highly favoured by nature. But, like the wife of Germanicus, Maria Theresa, "*infelici fecunditate fortunæ totiens obnoxia*," has witnessed the funerals of many of her children. I have already commemorated more than one instance. Of her numerous daughters, only two who are unmarried now remain alive. The first Mary Anne, eldest of all the Empress's issue, male or female, was born in 1738, two years before the decease of Charles the Sixth. In her person she is below the middle size, and a deformity in her configuration renders her lame; but I am told by persons who know her intimately, that her mind is much cultivated and enlarged by an acquaintance with polite letters. Though she enjoys the revenues of an Abbey at Prague, of which she is the titular Abbess; that ecclesiastical dignity neither compels her to residence, nor subjects her to any renunciations. Having passed her fortieth year, she no longer mixes in the amusements of the Court or capital,

capital, except on those particular occasions, when the Empress herself being present, she accompanies her mother to the Drawing-room.

The Archduchess Elizabeth is not yet six-and-thirty. Previous to her having caught the small-pox, it is universally asserted that her features were charming, and her face beautiful; but if they were so, not a trace of that beauty now remains. The two sisters have each a sort of establishment, consisting of a "Grand Maitre," and a "Grande Maitresse." In other respects, they lead a gloomy, tedious life; though the Archduchess Elizabeth has not yet renounced public diversions nor withdrawn herself from the amusements of the Carnival. Immured in the Imperial Palace, almost destitute of society; obliged to attend their mother wherever she moves, and compelled to assist at ceremonies or exercises of devotion, as if they were nuns, rather than Princesses; scarcely are they known to exist by any of the foreign nations of Europe, and never were any persons less objects of envy.

The Archduchess Christina, more favoured by nature, as well as by fortune, has at least found means to emancipate herself from the confinement and subjection of her two sisters. She is unquestionably a very superior woman, and merits that I should enter with some minuteness into her character, and the history of her life. Having completed her thirty-sixth year, she has now passed the meridian of her beauty; but her person, in spite of a delicate constitution and very impaired health, still possesses many charms. Her figure is of the middle size, well-formed, and finely proportioned; her eyes are full of vivacity, her features noble, as well as regular. Though naturally of a pale complexion, she wears no rouge; a renunciation submitted to, as may be presumed, more from deference to the Empress's pleasure, than from her own choice. Over all her limbs and motions is diffused an air of grandeur, which seems to announce high birth. Naturally distant and haughty, she can nevertheless, when such is her pleasure, temper her demeanor with the most

gracious and winning condescension. It is difficult to imagine a Princess more formed to represent the Majesty of the Throne. Nor is it only her person to which nature has been liberal; she possesses talents capable of producing very important public consequences, beneficial or injurious. Ambitious, enterprising, and no way deficient in political courage, she is not formed for the seclusion of private life, or for the uniform monotony of her mother's palace. Wherever she appears, in Hungary, and in Italy, no less than in Austria, her exertions leave behind them the traces of her active mind. Versed nevertheless in many of the softer accomplishments of her sex, she dedicates her leisure to the occupations of the pencil; and she particularly excels in painting, as various apartments in the castle of Presburg sufficiently testify; where I have seen portraits of her performance, executed in a masterly manner.

With such personal and intellectual endowments, it cannot, or it ought not to excite surprise, that she has always been the

favorite daughter of Maria Theresa; and that she possesses no inconsiderable ascendancy over her mother's political, as well as private conduct. Perhaps, that very influence may likewise explain the cause of the Emperor her brother's little attachment, not to say alienation, towards her. It is well known that he considers her as a powerful rival, capable of frustrating his views; and of impeding, if not totally overturning, his best matured plans of ambition or policy, by awakening the Empress's scruples, and touching her maternal feelings. At every period of her life, the Archduchess Christina has acted a principal part in the dissensions, cabals, and private history of the Imperial Family. The intimate friend and confidant of Joseph's first wife, the Infanta Isabella of Parma, she proved herself not less the enemy of his second, the unfortunate Bavarian. That Princess, it is asserted, experienced some mortifying effects of the Archduchess's unkind offices, during the short and melancholy period of her matrimonial union with the present Emperor.

Francis, her father, had intentions of giving her in marriage to his nephew, the Duke of Chablais, half-brother to the reigning King of Sardinia; a Prince whose age, birth, and affinity to the late Emperor, rendered him a natural object of Francis's selection. But, the young Archduchess had already disposed of her affections in another quarter, to a more fortunate suitor. Prince Albert of Saxony, fourth son of Augustus the Third, King of Poland, entered young into the Austrian service: his person, if it could not be denominated handsome, was at least tall, manly, and well-made; his manners engaging, and his character every way unexceptionable. By his mother, the late Queen of Poland, who was daughter of Joseph the First, he descended from the Austrian line, and stood in a near degree of consanguinity to Maria Theresa herself. His elevated rank, which gave him frequent access to the Archduchesses, facilitated the means of rendering himself peculiarly acceptable to the object of his choice. But, on the other hand, a younger brother of

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the Saxon family, whose only fortune, independent of his military appointments, was a moderate provision arising out of the Electoral revenues during life; however high his descent, or estimable his qualities, could not be considered as an equal, and still less as an advantageous match, for a daughter of the first crowned head in Europe. It is indeed generally supposed that the late Emperor would not have consented to such an alliance; and that if he had lived, the obstacles to her marriage with Prince Albert never could have been surmounted.

In the summer of the year 1765, when the Court of Vienna went into the Tyrol, the Archduchess Christina accompanied her father and mother. Francis was there met by the Duke of Chablais, and the propositions of his marriage were resumed, notwithstanding the repugnance for it manifested by the Princess. But, the emperor's sudden death at Inspruck, in the month of August, put an end to the negotiation; and so powerful were the Archduchess's supplications with Maria Theresa, that she soon afterwards consented

consented to give her daughter's hand to Prince Albert. They were married within eight months of Francis's decease, in April 1766, when she had nearly completed her twenty-fourth, as he had his twenty-eighth year. A daughter whom she brought him, lived only a very short time; and it is said that she suffered so much during her lying-in, as to be rendered incapable of bearing more children. Their union has been however, in all other respects, a happy one; and Prince Albert is scarcely less beloved by the Empress, than are her own sons.

Previous to the accomplishment of their nuptials, Maria Theresa resigned to her daughter and son-in-law, the Duchy of Teschen; a small and mountainous portion of Austrian Silesia, the revenues of which they enjoy during their joint lives. If they have no issue, it will again revert, at their decease, to the Crown. Still further to enable them to support their dignity, the Duke of Saxe-Teschen, (for so he is denominated,) has been created Captain-general and Governor of Hungary. In

that quality, he and the Archduchess occupy the castle of Presburg, where, during a part of the year, they reside and hold their Court. But, as Maria Theresa's attachment to them is too strong, not to render her desirous of enjoying their society, they have apartments in the Imperial Palace, which they inhabit at pleasure. A sense of interest, not less than the feelings of affection, may be supposed to influence them in the frequent visits which they make to Vienna. The Empress is naturally bounteous; and it is believed that her favorite daughter has not been wanting to improve to her own advantage, the moments of maternal tenderness.

But, it is not at Vienna alone, that the Archduchess's talents have found a theatre worthy of their exertion. After emancipating herself from domestic restraint, she undertook to liberate her sister the Queen of Naples, from political fetters. During a visit which the Archduchess Christina made, some years since, to the King and Queen of the Two Sicilies, she effected a complete change in the administration of that country.

try. The present King of Spain, at his departure for Madrid, in 1759, when he acceded to that monarchy on the death of Ferdinand the Sixth, left his son a minor, as is well known, under the tuition of the Marquis Tanucci; who, at the head of a council of regency, governed Naples during many years. Things remained in the same situation, after the marriage of the young King, and his attainment to majority; no person being found who would venture to overturn the system adopted, or to remove the ministers placed by Charles the Third. But, the arrival of the Archduchess Christina at Naples, was the term of Tanucci's elevation. Encouraged by her exhortations, and directed by her counsels, the Queen her sister induced the King to displace the first minister, to model the government anew, and under the name of Sambuca, to assume himself the efficient power.

The Emperor her brother has experienced no less sensibly the effects of the Archduchess's interposition, during the progress of the last campaign, in a manner which must have occasioned him the deepest mortification,

tification. No person here doubts, that the resolution taken by the Cabinet of Vienna, not to render Saxony the seat of war, as in sound policy the Austrians ought to have done; was principally, if not wholly, due to her tears and entreaties, which the Empress could not behold unmoved. Perhaps Joseph may at some future day resent and punish an interference, so incompatible with his objects of ambition. I know however, from incontestable authority, that Maria Theresa has already not only promised, but, has settled beyond a possibility of its being overturned by her successor, a future provision the most enviable for her daughter. Whether Prince Charles of Lorrain shall survive the Empress or not, the Archduchess Christina and her husband will be, on his decease, constituted Governors of the Austrian Low Countries for life. It has been the constant object of their attention; and notwithstanding the Emperor's reluctance, who is supposed to have intended that important charge for his brother Maximilian, he has been obliged to acquiesce in, and even to ratify his mother's determination. What-
ever

ever political changes may take place after the accession of Joseph the Second; while his mother survives, the Archduchess Christina will probably continue to act no unimportant part in the secret councils of the Imperial Cabinet.

The character of Maria Theresa appears to have partaken largely of the mutability connected with every thing human; and nothing can be more dissimilar than the same woman in 1741, and in 1779. Many of the leading features of her mind have undergone since that period, as complete a transformation as those of her person. Narrow prejudices and superstitious observances, obscure in some measure the eminent qualities with which she was endowed by nature; qualities which justly acquired her in the beginning of her reign, the admiration of all Europe. Perhaps however, we ought to pity, and almost to conceal defects, half apologized for by her sex and age, nursed by the bigotry of the people over whom she reigns, and become hereditary in the House of Austria. She retains, and I doubt not will ever continue to possess, many of the virtues and qualifications,

qualifications, which justly entitle her to rank among the best Princes who have swayed the sceptre in modern times. As a woman, in every relation of private life, she has not only been blameless, but meritorious. Her honor never suffered the slightest attain, and she was invariably, as well as tenderly, attached to the late Emperor Francis. An affectionate mother, a generous mistress, and a faithful friend, her heart has not been hardened or corrupted by the possession of power. It still remains accessible to every gentle and benevolent impression.

As little has age dried up or closed the channels of her liberality. She delights to give, to relieve distress, and to extend assistance to merit. At this very time, I know that the pensions and donations made from her privy purse, do not fall short of eighty thousand pounds sterling a-year. The indigent and the unfortunate of every description, find in her bounty a certain resource. Those who judge severely, incline to condemn her for too great a propensity to munificence, and denominate it facility or profusion. That it acquires her the affection of her subjects, is
however

however unquestionable. The soldiery idolize her, and would, I am persuaded, manifest the warmest enthusiasm in her defence. As she passes in her carriage, when at Schonbrun, she frequently throws handfuls of ducats to the guard. That she knows how to distinguish, and how to patronize genius or talents in every branch, the names of Van Swieten, Metastasio, Laudohn, Gluck, and many other eminent persons who have risen under her protection, will best evince. No princess was ever more open and gracious in her manners, more easy of access, or more disposed to redress the complaints of her people. They feel, but they pity and draw a veil over the weaknesses of her character. Her long reign has neither been marked by oppression, disgraced by cruelty, nor stained by blood. The Hungarians, who under Leopold, Joseph the First, and even under Charles the Sixth, were perpetually in arms against the Austrian Government, are become, under Maria Theresa, the surest supporters of the throne.

Her talents are confessedly good, and much above mediocrity. It is not saying enough,

enough, merely to assert that she possesses more capacity than her father or her grandfather, both of whom were Princes of very moderate endowments. Her judgment is sound, and she is neither blindly led by her son, nor by her ministers ; though she has suffered herself on various occasions to be over-ruled by them, in contradiction to her own wishes and opinion. The present war may be cited as a proof of her reluctant deference to their advice ; if, indeed, it may not rather be entirely and solely ascribed to the Emperor's ambition, desire to distinguish himself, and wish to avail himself of so favorable an occasion to augment his dominions. Prince Kaunitz, though he has been near five-and-twenty years at the head of affairs, and though he deservedly enjoys all Maria Theresa's confidence ; by no means governs her, as Prince Menzikoff governed Catharine the First of Russia, or as Biren, Duke of Courland, tyrannized over the Empress Anne. She demands, it is true, his opinion upon every point, and generally adopts it, or conforms to it ; but she determines for herself, and issues her orders in consequence.

The

The Emperor himself, her son, though possessing her warmest affection, associated to a participation in the Royal Authority, and declared Co-regent of Hungary, Bohemia, and all the Austrian dominions, yet remains dependent on his mother. She preserves the supreme direction, and is regarded as the efficient Sovereign. Even in the military department, which she has in some measure resigned to him, it may be questioned whether he can make any essential changes or regulations, without her consent and approbation. Conscious of possessing ability to govern, it is believed that she will never commit the felicity and protection of her people, to other hands than her own. If, in the evening of her reign, she is become enslaved to a womanish superstition, this weakness is obliterated by her magnanimity of mind, by the wisdom of her administration, by the prosperity that has attended her government, and by the beneficence of her character, which has rendered her no less dear to her subjects, than respected by foreign nations.

LETTER XXXI.

*Character and anecdotes of the Emperor Francis.
—Princess of Auerberg.—Her beauty, and accomplishments.—Her death.—Particulars of the
Emperor's death.*

VIENNA, February 19, 1779.

IT is not a little curious to reflect that the House of Austria, the German branch of which, during three centuries, from Frederic the Third to Charles the Sixth, uninterruptedly filled the Imperial Throne, is now sunk in the family of Lorrain. But, as if the great qualities and virtues of Maria Theresa supplied the defect in her sex, Europe still acknowledges in her person and descendants, the Austrian line. The late Emperor Francis was grandson to the celebrated Charles the Fifth, Duke of Lorrain, who lived an exile from his dominions, and who, when dying, left nothing to his children except his sword. Leopold, his son, restored to his patrimonial inhe-

inheritance of Lorrain at the peace of Ryf-
wick, was one of the most excellent and ami-
able princes who has appeared in modern
times. The blood of Austria was mingled
with that of Bourbon, in the veins of Francis;
Charles the Fifth; his grandfather, having
married an Archduchess; and Leopold, his
father, having espoused a daughter of Philip,
Duke of Orleans, brother of Louis the Four-
teenth. At the extinction of the family of
Medicis in 1737, when Lorrain was virtually
incorporated with the French Monarchy,
and when Don Carlos became King of
Naples; Francis, in virtue of the stipulations
made between France and Austria, was
transferred to Tuscany. It was then, as
Voltaire justly observes, that the famous
medal of Trajan, on the reverse of which was
inscribed "*Regna assignata*," might with
propriety have been renewed among modern
nations. In 1745, after the death of the
Bavarian Emperor Charles the Seventh, the
Great Duke of Tuscany, husband of Maria
Theresa, was raised to the Imperial Dignity.

Francis, who in his person was very hand-
some, was likewise expert in all the exercises.

of the body, and accounted uncommonly graceful on horseback. His countenance was not merely pleasing, but its expression was benign as well as conciliating. Towards the latter part of his life he grew corpulent: yet without losing his passion for the chace, which he always continued to pursue with ardor. An incontestable proof of his having been a very amiable man, is, that though a foreigner, his memory is universally cherished at Vienna. Few princes have been more generally beloved; since among the number of persons with whom I daily converse, who knew and remember him, I have never heard him mentioned, except with testimonies of lively affection and regret. His qualities were, indeed, rather such as ingratiate and attach, than of a nature to dazzle or impose. He possessed all the characteristic manners of the French nation, gallant, lively, polite, and superficial. Fond of society, of amusement, of dress, and of magnificence, pleasure, accompanied him wherever he moved. Vienna, during his life, must have been a far more elegant and luxurious capital than at present. An Italian opera, a

Ballet conducted by Noverre, comedies, and masquerades, in perpetual succession, while they rendered it brilliant, attracted foreigners to the Court. Joseph the Second by no means resembles his father in a taste for dissipation, expence, and the ceremonial of state.

The education of the late emperor had been neglected, to a degree uncommon among persons of his high birth, and of which it is difficult to form an adequate idea. So uninstructed was he even in the most ordinary branches of knowledge, as hardly to be able to read ; and his ordinary orthography would have disgraced a school-boy. This fact would be incredible, if I had not heard it from persons who loved him, and who lived with him in the closest intimacy. " More than once," said a lady to me, whom Francis distinguished by his friendship, " I have spared his Imperial Majesty the humiliation of not being able to decipher " a play-bill, and have read it to him." He possessed neither a taste for letters, nor an acquaintance with works of genius ; but he had travelled over many parts of Europe, and when Duke of Lorrain, had made some stay

in England, as well as at the Court of France. Having likewise resided in Italy, when great Duke of Tuscany, and visited various of the German Courts, he had acquired a degree of general information, from seeing so many capitals and countries. For chymical researches he had a decided passion, which he gratified by making multiplied attempts to attain the art of transmuting metals, or in other words, the Philosopher's Stone. His ill success only induced him to turn his attention to branches of similar pursuit, equally chimerical and impracticable. By means of large burning mirrors he endeavoured to dissolve diamonds, and out of many small, to form one large diamond; but he found that the process only converted them into crystal, or totally deprived them of their lustre by calcining them to a cinder.

Francis, though not distinguished by the talents for war which his grandfather Charles the Fifth, Duke of Lorraine, eminently possessed, was nevertheless considered as personally brave. During the last years of the Emperor Charles the Sixth, he served against the Turks in Slavonia and
Serbia,

Servia, without acquiring any military reputation. He had likewise been placed, rather nominally than in effect, at the head of the Austrian forces in 1741 ; but, during the whole course of the great " war of seven " years," the Empress's attachment was too warm and tender, to permit of her separation from her husband, or to allow him to hazard his person in the field. This conduct gave occasion to many sarcastic remarks, on the part of his Prussian Majesty. Accustomed himself to brave every kind of danger, and a stranger to conjugal felicity, he treated with derision the inglorious retreat of Francis, in the arms of his wife. Maria Theresa was not a little mortified, as well as irritated, by the reflections which Frederic publicly made on the nature of her affection, and on her reasons for not exposing him to the dangers and hardships of a German campaign. They served only to widen the breach between the two courts, and to mix personal animosity with political quarrels.

Neither the immense advantages derived by Francis from the Austrian alliance, which raised him to the Imperial Dignity ; nor the

presence, rank, and character of a wife who possessed so many claims to his affection; could nevertheless impose a restraint on his inclinations, or prevent his being guilty of infidelity to the marriage bed. Of a disposition ardent as well as enterprising, in pursuits of gallantry, it was said to be dangerous for a woman of honour and beauty to remain alone in his company. He never failed, it is true, in every testimony of external deference and respect towards the Empress, with whom he lived on terms of the most cordial union: a numerous and beautiful family cemented their mutual regard: but, Francis was not the less irregular in the gratification of his passions. Towards the conclusion of his life he became constant to one person, who maintained her ascendancy over him to the last moment. I mean the Princess of Auerberg, a woman too celebrated, as well as extraordinary, not to enter into some of the particulars of her history and character.

Maria Wilhelmina de Neuperg, daughter to the celebrated Marshal Count Neuperg, so well known in the history of the reign of
Charles

Charles the Sixth, and in the beginning of that of Maria Theresa, was born on the 30th of April 1738. As her father was Governor of Luxembourg, she, while very young, was often carried to Brussels and to Spa; where she acquired, by the mixture of company and society found in those places, an ease and elegance of manners, which the more formal, or contracted style of female education in Austria, did not then commonly bestow on women even of the highest rank. When scarcely sixteen, Marshal Neuperg brought her to the Imperial Court, of which she immediately became the wonder and the delight. I have been unanimously assured by all who knew her, that no description can convey an adequate or just idea of her attractions. She was of the middle size, her complexion a clear brown, her eyes grey, her hair chestnut, luxuriant, and glossy. But, her face and cast of countenance were of that kind, to which, it is said, no painter could ever do justice; because, when she conversed, a thousand graces lighted up in it, and gave her an

A A 4 animation

animation beyond the power of art to imitate or to convey.

So gentle and conciliating were her manners, that she seemed incapable of offending, or intentionally giving pain. Destitute of affectation, she never laboured to please ; for Nature had done all, and she had only to appear, in order to be admired and beloved. Such was her superiority of personal beauty, as to be out of the reach of competition ; and such the insinuating sweetness of her address, as to be irresistible. She excited love in one sex, without awakening envy or rivalry in the other ; and she made no enemies, because she never attempted raillery or ridicule. Her conversation was gay, easy, and amusing ; but she neither possessed any uncommon natural endowments of mind, nor had she a very cultivated understanding. Prodigal from temper, careless of money, and loving rather to enrich her relations than herself, she knew no bounds to her profusion. A passion for play, which she indulged without restraint after her marriage, caused her to lose immense sums at
9. the

the gaming table. Her heart, naturally generous and disinterested, was likewise tender and yielding. Fickle and capricious, she seldom remained long constant in her preference of any lover; but, her very foibles had in them something amiable; and it is said to have been impossible to know her, without feeling attachment towards her.

So distinguished a person, and so highly endowed by nature, could not long remain without offers and solicitations of the most flattering kind. Among her suitors she reckoned the present Marshal Lacy, as well as other noblemen of the greatest rank and fortune. Having selected Prince Auerberg, she was married to him in April 1755, when she had just completed her seventeenth year. The Prince her husband, already a widower, was then about four-and-thirty. Besides her personal attractions, she brought him a fortune of full twelve thousand pounds sterling; a sum considered as immense at Vienna, where women of the highest quality have rarely above six or eight hundred pounds for their portion. But, such was
her

her rage for play, that in the course of the first summer after her marriage, while she was at the Prince's husband's country-seat, she lost this whole sum at the gaming table; principally to her brother, Count Neuperg. She is said to have lost at cards, twelve thousand ducats, or above five thousand pounds sterling, in the course of a single evening; and her profusion was similar in other respects.

Only an Imperial lover, and one as generous as Francis, could long suffice for such demands. He found little difficulty in rendering himself acceptable to her; his rank, his assiduities, and his presents, having removed the first obstacles; but, her inconstancy excluded him from the sole possession of her heart. Francis was not the less permanently attached to her. In her society, and that of a select company of both sexes, he used to pass many of his evenings. A supper of ten or twelve covers was provided, where the Princess presided, and from which all form or etiquette were banished. In public, whether at the theatre, or elsewhere, Francis observed

observed towards the Empress every mark of deference and attention; but, when she was not present at the performance, he always repaired to the Princess's box. At the opera he usually stood behind her, concealed from view; and the box was locked, in order to prevent intrusion. Notwithstanding these precautions, a cough to which he was subject, generally betrayed his retreat, and divulged the secret to the world.

When the Imperial Court went to Innspruck, in the summer of the year 1765, the Princess of Auerberg did not remain behind at Vienna. But, with the decease of the Emperor, which took place in the Tyrol, her consideration likewise expired. It is a fact, that on the evening preceding his dissolution, which was sudden and unexpected, he had presented her an order on his treasurer, for no less a sum than two hundred thousand florins, or near twenty thousand pounds. As he died the following day, which was Sunday, the interval was too short, to allow her time for receiving the money. In a secret council, held after Francis's

Francis's death, it was debated whether a pecuniary donation of such a nature, to so great an amount, should or ought to be fulfilled. More than one voice declared against it; but Maria Theresa, superior to every consideration except what she thought her own and her husband's honour demanded, issued orders punctually to discharge the sum.

During the Emperor's life, she had always treated the Princess with uncommon marks of distinction; a conduct only to be explained by her affection for him, which extended even to his weaknesses, and respected his very faults. Such was her attachment to his memory, or the magnanimity and enlargement of her mind, that it is probable she would have continued the same treatment after Francis was no more, if the Princess had not wantonly incensed her, by a behaviour at once unbecoming and imprudent. The Empress's grief for the loss of her husband, was well known to be sincere, as well as profound; and she remained a long time shut up in the palace at Vienna, a prey to dejection, in the deepest retirement.

retirement. When she re-appeared in public, the ladies of the Court were permitted to wait on her, and to pay their compliments of condolence, but with the express prohibition of wearing Rouge. The Princess of Auerberg alone, who ventured to disobey the order, came to the Palace in deep mourning, but most elegantly dressed, and with a profusion of Rouge. Maria Theresa did not conceal her resentment at this conduct; and when the Princess approached to kiss her hand, she drew back with an air of indignation and amazement that struck every one present. So glaring a contempt of decorum on so melancholy an occasion, and in such a place, was never pardoned by the Empress, and justly merited reprehension.

She had previously given the Princess a convincing proof of her superiority to little interests, and of her generous manner of acting in all pecuniary concerns. Francis, with a view of having the object of his attachment constantly near him, presented her a small farm-house near the palace of
Laxem-

Luxembourg, where the Court usually passed a considerable part of the summer. He did not venture to give her an apartment in the palace itself, as it would have been too obvious a mark of disrespect to the Empress. The Princess had expended a considerable sum of money in furnishing and embellishing this cottage, which she had rendered very commodious. After the Emperor's decease, Maria Theresa caused it to be signified to her, that she wished to purchase it, and therefore desired her to fix her own price on it; meaning to take away all future pretext for her being at Luxembourg, when the Court resided there. The Princess named thirty thousand florins, or near three thousand pounds, as the price of her cottage; a sum far exceeding its real value: but, the Empress sent it to her instantly, without deduction or hesitation. Even to the last moment, she observed the utmost civility towards her, and never behaved to her with harshness or insult.

The

The Princess of Auerberg survived her Imperial lover more than ten years, but never had any children, either before, or after his death. It seems uncertain what was the precise nature of the disorder which proved fatal to her, and many different accounts are related of it here. That she had a contraction in her limbs, for which frictions were prescribed, is undoubted ; but, whether the use of them accelerated her end, as is pretended, I will not venture to say. Humbourg, a surgeon of reputation who practises at this time in Vienna, attended her. The frictions which were prescribed by him, being, as it would appear, too violent for her frame, not only caused her extreme pain, but produced a contraction in the parts where they were applied. I had the curiosity to inquire the circumstances of her illness and death, only a few days since, of Brambilla, another very eminent practitioner, who was called in to her assistance, at a late stage of her distemper. "When I visited the Princess, she had already," said he, "a contraction in one
" arm."

“ arm, leg, and thigh, for which frictions
“ were advised. Having used them, they
“ appeared to succeed; and she was so much
“ amended in consequence, that she re-
“ covered in some measure the power of
“ moving her limbs. We began to enter-
“ tain sanguine hopes of her recovery, when
“ a violent inflammation on her lungs ren-
“ dered all medical skill vain, and put an
“ end to her life.” Whatever was the cause,
she died at Vienna, scarcely three years and
a half ago, in October 1775, before she had
attained to the age of eight-and-thirty.

It only remains to relate the particulars
of the Emperor Francis's last seizure and
death. The marriage of the present Great
Duke of Tuscany, Leopold, with the In-
fanta of Spain, Maria Louisa, which was to
be solemnized at Inspruck, in the summer of
1765, carried the Imperial Court into the
Tyrol. Joseph, the present Emperor, then
King of the Romans, as well as various of
the Archdukes and Duchesses, accompanied
their Majesties thither. It is certain that

Francis

Francis undertook the journey with repugnance, which sentiment he expressed to various persons before he set out from Vienna. The Court remained for several weeks at Innspruck, during which time the weather happened to be so constantly rainy, that the Emperor could not take his accustomed exercise of hunting. He seemed to be anxious and oppressed in mind, without precisely knowing the cause, or without any decided indisposition. The Empress, ever attentive to the least change in his health, would have persuaded him to lose some blood; but, as he had a dislike to the operation, he always procrastinated it; and on her urging him to submit, he refused, adding with some warmth, "*Madame, voulez vous que je meurs dans la saignée?*" He still continued uneasy, ever wishing to be gone from the Tyrol, where a weight constantly hung upon his spirits; and in answer to those persons who inquired of him how he found himself, he always replied, "*Je me porterai bien, quand une fois je serai à Vienne.*" More

than once, looking round on the high mountains with which Inspruck is invested, the air of which place seemed to affect his respiration; he exclaimed, "Ah! si je
" pourrois seulement sortir de ces mon-
" tagnes du Tyrol!" All these facts evidently prove that Francis felt himself menaced with an apoplectic attack, which the air in the vallies of the Tyrol probably accelerated, by its pressure on the brain.

During the whole course of the day upon which he expired, he complained of a dizziness and suffocation that greatly incommoded him; but, which, nevertheless, did not prevent him from appearing at the Opera. It was on Sunday, the 18th of August, 1765. Previous to setting out, he waited on the Empress, in order to wish her a good night, according to his usual custom, as she did not accompany him to the theatre; and after the performance, he was to have supped with the Princess of Auerberg and a select party, for which
repast

repast all the requisite preparations were made. I have already mentioned elsewhere that his nephew the Duke of Chablais, had repaired to Inspruck by the Emperor's invitation, who had intentions of giving him the Archduchess Christina in marriage. During the progress of the Opera, Francis found himself much indisposed; and in order to diminish the difficulty of breathing, he took some drops, though without any considerable effect. The Princess of Auerberg was in her private box, to which the Emperor was accustomed frequently to repair, when not accompanied by the Empress. But, the Duke of Chablais's presence imposing a restraint on him, prevented his gratifying that inclination. He contented himself, therefore, with making signs to the Princess, that he was unwell, by pointing to his head; and as she was seated opposite, she plainly perceived his indisposition, which became more violent every minute.

Unwilling to quit the theatre, or to interrupt the performance, he remained, nevertheless,

less, some time longer in the box; till finding himself menaced with a total loss of sense, he rose up and went out, followed only by the Baron de Reischach and one or two other noblemen. When the Emperor came into the air, he seemed to stagger; but, on being asked by one of his attendants, whether he was ill, he said in German, "A man of spirit is not affected by a small matter." These were the last words that he ever pronounced. He still attempted however to proceed, in hopes of reaching his own apartment, to attain which he was obliged to descend a flight of wooden steps. Coming to the top, his head grew so disordered that he laid hold on the sentinel's arm who stood there on guard, with a view to prevent himself from falling; and as he tried to advance, at the second or third step he fell forwards. The persons who were about him, instantly carried him to a little antichamber adjoining, where they laid him on a common pallet bed, belonging to one of the lacqueys of the Court. While messengers

gers were sent for medical aid, the King of the Romans was called out from the Opera. Hurrying to the room, he took his father in his arms, and manifested the deepest affliction. The Emperor's veins, meanwhile, were cut, his temples scarified, and every method used to recover him, but in vain. He gave no sign of sense, and little indication of life, his tongue hanging out of his mouth. It was soon perceived that he was dead, and the physicians pronounced that all further efforts were to no purpose.

Meanwhile, as the intelligence spread through the palace, it became necessary to announce the event to the Empress. She received it with marks of the acutest distress, which were heightened by the apprehensions that her deceased husband had been taken away unprepared, in the midst of his pleasures; and before he had made his peace with Heaven by prayer or confession. A council was instantly held, at which it was resolved that her Majesty should quit Inspruck, as soon as the requisite preparations could be made for her departure. In order

to avoid all spectators, and as the most private mode of conveyance, a boat was fitted up for her reception, into which she went on the ensuing day, only accompanied by her son the present Emperor, Count Dietrichstein Master of the Horse, and one Lady of the Bed-chamber. They descended the river Inn to its confluence with the Danube, and thence down that stream to Vienna.

Innsbruck was presently abandoned by all the Courtiers, and the roads in every direction were covered with horses and carriages. In two or three days after the Emperor's death, hardly a person was to be seen in the streets of a place, which had been so lately the seat of amusements, crowded with the first Nobility of Austria and Italy. Every one, occupied with their own concerns, quitted the corpse of the deceased Prince. But a circumstance almost incredible, and which I should scarcely venture to relate, if I had not received it from high authority, I must subjoin. Count Hatzfeldt, who is minister of state for the interior, a nobleman equally

respectable for his talents and his public services; assured me himself, that he entered the chamber where his Imperial Majesty lay dead, in less than two hours after he expired. To the Count's astonishment, he found the corpse stretched on the wretched pallet bed, where they had placed him, absolutely alone, not even an attendant near him; while two or three lingering drops of blood were still oozing from the orifice which the surgeons had opened. Perhaps however, this fact ought not to surprize; history is full of similar examples.

LETTER XXXII.

State of the public mind at Vienna.—Arrival of the preliminaries of peace.—Satisfaction of the Court.—Entrance of the King of Prussia into Bohemia.—Disgust of the Austrian army to the continuance of the war.

VIENNA, February 25, 1779.

THE present month has been passed in perpetual vicissitudes of fear and hope, as the prospect of war or peace alternately assumed a more probable appearance. Even up to the actual moment, nothing decisive is known, though every day and hour may now unfold whether Germany is destined to be the theatre of another campaign ; or whether the House of Austria will make such concessions of territory, as may satisfy the jealousy of Frederic and his Allies. In the last days of January, Mellendorf, one of the Prussian Generals, unexpectedly entered Bohemia, and advanced to the little

town of Brix, which he pillaged. On his retreat towards the confines of Saxony, he was attacked by a body of Austrians, from whom he took two pieces of cannon and some prisoners, after which he continued his march out of Bohemia. These partial incursions increase the calamities, without deciding the fate, or accelerating the conclusion of the war. On the part of his Prussian Majesty, they are probably intended only to keep alive the ardour of his troops, and to habituate them, after sixteen years of repose, to the fatigues of a winter campaign. They may likewise conduce to obliterate the recent disgrace of Habelschwert, which had unquestionably stained the lustre of his arms, while it elevated proportionably the Austrian courage and reputation.

Just before the close of a Carnival, that has been by no means cheerful, arrived on the thirteenth of this month, a courier from Prince Repnin, the Russian Minister at Breslau. His dispatches, instead of being addressed

addressed to any member of the administration here, were directed to the Baron de Breteuil, the French Ambassador; who appears, though faintly, to assume the same character of a mediator on the part of Austria, which Prince Repnin, by order of his Court, avowedly occupies for Prussia. It was instantly reported that the messenger had brought the preliminaries of a general pacification; a piece of intelligence which excited the strongest sensations throughout this capital. When the Baron de Breteuil arrived at Prince Kaunitz's with the news, though it was near eight o'clock in the evening, an hour at which the Empress is already preparing to go to rest; the Prime Minister immediately repaired to the palace, to communicate to her the welcome information. We are ignorant of the particulars of their interview and conversation; but, no one doubts the joy of Maria Theresa, at the prospect of seeing a speedy conclusion put to the war. She no longer conceals her apprehensions of its inglorious,

glorious, if not injurious consequences to the House of Austria; and she probably anticipates the necessity of restoring the portion of Bavaria occupied by her troops. In the bitterness of her emotions, some days ago, she exclaimed, after perusing a letter transmitted her by Prince Kaunitz, "I perceive that I have neither an individual in the German Empire, nor an ally in Europe, who will aid my cause." Domestic vexations increase her political chagrin. Not only the Great Duchess of Tuscany is at present confined by illness to her chamber; but, the Archduke Maximilian, the Empress's youngest son, one of the most amiable and worthy Princes in the world, has been obliged to have recourse to the baths of Baden, four leagues distant from Vienna, for the recovery of his health. The fatigues of the late campaign, on which he accompanied his brother the Emperor, are supposed to have been too severe for his strength, and to have given a rude shock to his constitution.

Even

Even Joseph himself, if we may trust to appearances, is heartily tired of his new military profession, and scarcely less desirous of peace than his mother. He has found the science of tactics, and the command of armies, more difficult than he had apprehended. Counteracted in the cabinet, and disliked in the camp; after a campaign no way fertile in laurels, he finds neither his fame, nor his popularity increased. He feels doubtless, likewise, that the general voice of Europe is against him; that not only the King of Prussia, but the German Princes are preparing to check his ambitious enterprizes; and that the accession of territory acquired from the seizure of Lower Bavaria, even if finally retained, may be dearly purchased by incurring universal condemnation. His conduct, and every circumstance of his behaviour, since the arrival of Prince Repnin's courier, manifest a satisfaction, which he has not attempted to disguise, or affected to conceal. After having been withdrawn from society during the whole Carnival, and rarely appearing
either

either in public, or in private company, he has at length shewn himself again to his subjects. On the three days that immediately followed the reception of the late news, his Imperial Majesty was present each evening at the Ridottos. With a smiling countenance, he accosted every one whom he knew, entered familiarly into conversation, and seemed desirous of persuading all who saw him, that he sincerely participates in the wish for peace which animates the Empress, and pervades the Cabinet. The Carnival finished under these flattering symptoms of returning tranquillity.

So satisfactory were the articles brought by Prince Repnin's Courier from Bresslau, as the basis of a definitive treaty, considered by the Court; and so thoroughly were the Austrian Ministers convinced of the probability of its speedy accomplishment, that they relaxed in many essential preparations for the approaching campaign. The war was indeed generally regarded as at an end. The contract for mules was not only stopped, but even the transportation

transportation of cannon from the arsenal was suspended. Vienna, during five or six days, enjoyed a delusive calm, which was suddenly interrupted by a report, that Frederic having privately quitted Breslau, was arrived at Schweidnitz. Instantly all the public offices were in motion, and consternation succeeded to security. Not an instant was lost in sending off Generals Nostitz and Richécour to join the army in Bohemia. Prince Charles Lichtenstein's baggage followed, and every thing indicated immediate hostilities. The alarm was not by any means false, or even exaggerated; and the intelligence of the entrance of the King of Prussia in person into Bohemia, at the head of twelve thousand troops, which arrived next day, sufficiently proved that he did not trust solely to the mediation of Catharine, however sincere or efficacious, for producing peace.

An irruption so unexpected, at this inclement season, has roused the Imperial Cabinet from their premature security. They begin to perceive

perceive that the weight of near seventy years, added to numerous infirmities, have not yet subdued the spirit of Frederic, nor prevented him from leading his forces as in former wars. We know that he has already reached Braunau, while the Austrians, unprepared to oppose him, fall back in every direction. Vienna offers at the present moment, a curious mixture of contradictory appearances, and contending emotions. The people, indignant at the idea of a peace which is about to be signed, at the time when a Prussian army is ravaging Bohemia; exclaim against such humiliation, as no less degrading to the national character and arms, than unbecoming the Majesty of the Throne. The upper orders are divided in opinion; some loudly reprobating a continuation of the war, while others as warmly insist on the necessity of its vigorous prosecution. But, only one sentiment pervades the military department; disgust and aversion to further hostilities. Actuated in a peculiar manner by these feelings, Marshal Laudohn,

Laudohn, to whom the Emperor, only two days since, offered the command of the forces in Bohemia, declined it, on pretence of indisposition. His infirmities of body and mind incapacitated him, as he assured his Majesty, for so important a station. Joseph, equally astonished and chagrined at the refusal, asked him, whether he would not accompany him at least into the field? Laudohn replied, that as to his person, it was absolutely at his Majesty's disposal. He has not forgotten the affair of Munchengratz, where Joseph, by his interference, snatched from him a certain victory over Prince Henry of Prussia, nor will he be easily induced to subject himself to a repetition of such disgrace.

Meanwhile the negotiations for peace are not discontinued, though the utmost uncertainty respecting their termination still prevails here. The Prussians are now said to be retiring from Braunau and Trautenau; but, reports that they are assembling in the vicinity of Egra, on the western frontier of Bohemia,

Bohemia, have spread new alarm through this capital. A short time must decide the question of peace or war. While that great event hangs in suspense, let us take a survey of the characters of his Imperial Majesty, and of the Austrian prime Minister.

LETTER XXXIII.

Joseph the Second.—His Education.—Partiality of the Emperor and Empress for the Archduke Charles.—Marriage of Joseph with the Infanta of Parma.—Particulars of that Princess's character, illness, and death.—Indecision of the Imperial Court on the choice of another Princess.—Second marriage of Joseph.—Qualities and death of the Empress Maria Josepha of Bavaria.—Attachments of the Emperor.—Manner of passing his time.—His person, manners, and accomplishments.—Indifference for the Arts.—Association to the royal authority.—Regulations and measures of Joseph.—Particulars of his private life and character.—Interview of Neiss.—Interview of Neustadt.—Anecdotes of Joseph.—His love of travel.—Activity.—Economy.—Courage.—Passion for war.—Ambition.

VIENNA, March 4, 1779.

JOSEPH the Second was born on the 13th of March, 1741, at a most critical period of his mother's reign; a few months after the

the decease of her father, Charles the Sixth, when she was reduced to fly from Vienna to the Hungarians, for shelter and protection. He was committed to the care of the Marshal Prince Battiani, while still a child; but at that time, and even long afterwards, he gave few or no indications of an active and superior mind. Extreme timidity, accompanied with awkwardness and embarrassment, characterized his manners. Reserved in his deportment, and manifesting neither military ardor, nor aptitude for business, he was considered as incapable of ever conducting public affairs. So convinced was the Empress Queen of her eldest son's being deficient in talents, that when alone with those in whom she reposed a confidence, she frequently complained of the unjust caprice of Fortune; who destined the Throne to a Prince destitute of ability, while a youth adorned with every quality requisite for governing mankind, was excluded from power. In making this remark, she alluded to the Arch-

duke Charles, her second son, for whom she had conceived the strongest predilection. Equally prepossessed against Joseph, she hardly enquired of the masters to whom his education was committed, what progress he made in his studies. It was not till after his brother's decease, that he began to be known and considered, either by his parents or by the Court.

Towards the conclusion of the late war, in 1761, when he was about twenty years old, Joseph made an attempt to emancipate and distinguish himself, by demanding permission of his parents to serve against the Prussians. This first display of energy in the Archduke was nevertheless overruled, and his request was rejected; not so much on account of any apprehensions entertained relative to his personal safety, as from a wish to repress his ardor, and to retain him still in obscurity. Though Francis, no less than the Empress, treated him with such alienation, or severity, Joseph submitted in silence; uttered no complaint, concealed his very wishes, and endeavoured carefully to avoid any subject of competition which
might

might awaken his father's jealousy. But Marshal Battiani, his Governor, who knew him well, and who had studied his character, made no scruple of declaring to his own particular friends, that "the Archduke" "was not what he seemed; that those who" "judged of him by appearances, would be" "ultimately mistaken: and that his real dis-" "position, as well as his capacity, never" "would be unfolded to the world, till after" "the Emperor his father's death." Time has already proved the truth of this prediction.

It is incontestable that Francis, throughout the whole course of his life, did not manifest any warm attachment for his eldest son. All his partiality, like Maria Theresa's, was reserved for the Archduke Charles; a Prince, who is universally allowed to have possessed very extraordinary endowments. He was born in February 1745, and expired at Vienna in 1761, when he had scarcely completed his sixteenth year. While they were children, his elder brother Joseph and he never lived in amity; and as

they advanced towards manhood, the alienation between them, fomented by many causes, naturally increased. Charles, if incensed, did not scruple sometimes to say, that "he had the advantage in birth, " Joseph being only son to the *Great Duke of Tuscany*, while he himself was the son " of *the Emperor*." The assertion was nevertheless not quite accurate, since Francis was only elected to the Imperial dignity, and crowned at Frankfort, in September 1745, seven months subsequent to the Archduke Charles's birth.

By the concurring testimony of all who remember him, he appears to have been a youth of uncommon, and almost premature talents; bold, lively, and enterprising beyond his years. But his temper was irascible; and his disposition mischievous, as well as intractable. Such an union of ability and of violence, fanned by parental partiality, might, it was apprehended, have produced unpleasant, if not dangerous consequences, from the animosity that subsisted between

12 him.

him and his brother Joseph, if Charles had attained to riper years. He was himself so sensible of the disturbances likely to arise in the Imperial Family from this cause, that in his last hours he avowed it to the Empress his mother. When he lay dying, and she sat by him on the bed, dissolved in tears, he said to her, taking her hand in his, "Madam, do not lament so bitterly my approaching end; for had I lived, I should have given you much greater cause of sorrow." He expired a few hours afterwards, meeting the approaches of death with the utmost firmness and courage.

Some months previous to this event, the Archduke Joseph, then in his twentieth year, was married in October 1760, to Elizabeth Maria, Infanta of Parma. She was daughter of Don Philip, Duke of Parma; who was the younger son of Philip the Fifth, King of Spain: and as her mother, a Princess of France, was the eldest of Louis the Fifteenth's children, the Infanta consequently descended on both sides from the

House of Bourbon. Her father, Don Philip, one of the most worthy and amiable Princes of our time, is said to have perished by a death equally tragical and singular. I have been assured from high authority, that while hunting in the woods of Colorno, near Parma, in July 1765, he was missed by his attendants, and that when they found him, he was already half devoured by his own hounds; only some mutilated remains of his body being discovered. It is supposed that having been thrown from his horse, the dogs might have tasted of his blood, and afterwards have fallen upon him, as he lay stunned or insensible on the ground. I am nevertheless far from venturing absolutely to guarantee a story, which seems to partake too much of the marvellous easily to challenge belief; and which is denied at Parma, where Don Philip's death is attributed to the small-pox. His daughter's history contains, however, circumstances scarcely less extraordinary, which stand upon such testimony as it is difficult to controvert, or to call in question.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Maria of Parma, who was born in the same year with her husband, the Archduke Joseph, though agreeable in her person, possessed no pretensions to be termed beautiful. She had the deep complexion of a Spaniard, which was contrasted to her disadvantage at Vienna, by a comparison with the fair and delicate skins of the Archduchesses her sisters-in-law, some of whom might then rank with the most lovely young women in Europe. Her mouth was pretty, her teeth fine, and her eyes animated; but when she was silent or thoughtful, as frequently happened, her countenance lost all its attractions. I have seen many portraits of her; in particular two, which are at the Castle of Presburg in Hungary, both of them painted by the Archduchess Christina, and probably may be esteemed flattering resemblances. They exactly correspond to the foregoing description, and convey the idea of a dark Spanish woman, with a long contour of face, and black sparkling eyes.

Her understanding was cultivated, and her mind highly accomplished. She painted,
and

and performed on many instruments of music, particularly on the violin, in a masterly manner; her active temper impelling her continually to some new pursuit or employment. Above all, she possessed the talent of interesting and amusing the Archduke her husband, when alone. But her talents and accomplishments were alike obscured by a settled melancholy, which, whether purely constitutional, or the result of other causes, became so habitual and inveterate, as to absorb, in some measure, all the other features of her character. No pleasures, and no endeavours on the part of those about her, could ever surmount this gloom, which, far from diminishing, appeared to acquire force from time. In every part of her story there is something enigmatical and mysterious, not easy to penetrate, which powerfully interests, while it awakens curiosity.

I have been assured that when the noblemen, who were commissioned by the Court of Vienna to demand her in marriage for the Archduke Joseph, arrived at Parma, and were presented to her, she addressed herself

herself to them with great earnestness :
“ I am,” said she, “ exceedingly flattered
“ by so distinguished a preference over
“ the other Princesses of Europe, as their
“ Imperial Majesties have shewn, in chus-
“ ing me for the wife of their eldest son ;
“ an alliance as much above my merits,
“ as beyond my expectations. I have
“ only to regret, that the trouble which
“ they have given themselves will be en-
“ tirely ineffectual, since I am well con-
“ vinced that I shall not live long enough
“ to answer the views designed by my
“ marriage.” Whether this story be lite-
rally true or not, there is no doubt that
from the day of her quitting Parma, to
that of her death, she constantly persevered
in believing and asserting that her life
would be short. Piety, as well as love,
were supposed to be the causes of so extra-
ordinary a persuasion. Her disposition,
naturally pensive and religious, was capa-
ble of deep impressions, and of strong
attachments. A report prevailed, to which
some

some degree of probability is due, that she had disposed of her heart and affections, before she quitted Italy. It is certain that she expressed her wishes to have been permitted to take the veil, and to retire into a nunnery; a request which added force to the former suspicion.

On her first arrival at Vienna, she was received by the Emperor and Empress, with every demonstration of joy and pleasure. The marriage was solemnized, and she soon acquired an interest in the affections of the Archduke her husband, of which he gave her the strongest proofs. Whenever she went to the theatre, or appeared elsewhere in public, he rarely failed to accompany her, usually carried her cloak on his arm, and manifested in all his actions, the part which he took in her felicity. This conduct excited the greater surprize, as he had universally been accused of insensibility towards women; and those who thought they knew his character best, pronounced him incapable, or unfit, for a state of matrimonial happiness. She behaved

behaved on her part towards him with great external attention, though it is supposed that her heart remained untouched and unaffected by the testimonies of his passion. While she was compelled to appear in public, or in society, she indeed endeavoured to assume a degree of cheerfulness; but no sooner was she retired to her own apartment, than she sunk into melancholy and dejection. As her favorite topic of meditation and conversation, was death, she anxiously seized every occasion of being alone, and of indulging without restraint her reflexions on this subject.

The Archduchess's pregnancy, which took place in 1761, was a natural subject of joy to the Imperial Family. She lay in of a daughter, who was named Theresa after the Empress Queen, and of whom she herself was passionately fond. But neither the feelings of a mother, the attachment manifested by her husband, nor the prospect of her own elevation to the highest dignity of the German Empire, could dissipate her habitual melancholy. With unconcern and
indif-

indifference, she heard of the measures taken to secure the Archduke Joseph's election as King of the Romans; and she seemed to feel no interest in his approaching coronation at Frankfort. "These things," said she frequently, "regard not me. I shall never live to be Queen of the Romans."

Far from concealing her opinion on a point so delicate, she made no scruple of declaring it to the Empress, to her sisters-in-law the Archduchesses, and to the Ladies in attendance about her person. However strange or incredible the fact may appear, it is incontrovertible. Many women of the highest rank, and most unimpeached veracity in Vienna, assure me that they have heard the Archduchess frequently predict her own dissolution as imminent. The Empress Queen herself made no secret of it at the time, and has confirmed with her own lips, the truth of the anecdote here related, within these few months past.

"More than once," said a lady to me lately, when conversing on the subject,

"I have

“ I have attempted to oppose ridicule, as
“ well as reason, to the Archduchess’s pre-
“ possession: but she remained immove-
“ able, and always persisted that she should
“ die soon. . . One day as she held this lan-
“ guage, I said to her, ‘ Est il donc possible
“ que votre Altesse oublie qu’elle a une
“ fille qu’elle aime tendrément? Et peut
“ elle la quitter avec tant de sang froid et
“ d’indifference?’—‘ Vous croyez done,’
“ answered the Princess, ‘ que je vous lais-
“ serai *mon jeune*?’ which was the appella-
“ tion by which she always called her
“ daughter. ‘ Oh! ma foi, non! vous ne
“ la garderez tout au plus, que six ou sept
“ ans.” This reply will appear the more
extraordinary, when I add, that the child
died at the age of about seven years, and
consequently that her mother’s prediction
was literally accomplished.

· In the summer of the year 1763, she was
a second time declared to be pregnant; but,
as she advanced towards the term of her deli-
very, her firm persuasion that her death ap-
proached,

proached, acquired new force. She was, notwithstanding, to all appearance, in a state of perfect health. The Archduchess Christina, since married to Prince Albert of Saxony, enjoyed a distinguished place in her affection and friendship. To her the Archduchess Joseph not only declared that she should die before the end of the year, but she laid her a bett of it. The circumstance was public, and generally known at the time. Returning in the autumn to Vienna from the palace of Laxembourg, where the Court had passed the summer; when the carriage reached the summit of the hill from whence the city is discovered, she was seized with a shivering, and exclaimed that she was about to die.

The month of November, nevertheless, arrived, without any apparent symptoms to justify her prediction, or rather prepossession; but she invariably persisted in it. On the eighteenth, at night, as she was sitting in her own apartment, an alarum clock which stood there, struck several times after it ought regularly

to have ceased. This accident, probably caused by some disorder in the springs or mechanism of the machine, appeared to the Archduchess to be supernatural. She turned pale, and on the ladies who were with her inquiring the cause of the alteration in her countenance; "It is the signal," said she, "that calls me away," pointing to the clock. She continued notwithstanding, in health till the following day, the nineteenth of November, which was the anniversary of her birth, when she had completed her twenty-second year. In the morning the Archduchess Christina rallied her on her absurd apprehensions, for which no visible cause was to be perceived or assigned. Except the inconvenience and indisposition necessarily attached to her advanced state of pregnancy, she appeared to have no bodily complaint.

Towards the evening of that day, as she was walking across her chamber, she suddenly fell, or rather sunk down on her knees. Her attendants immediately laid her on a couch, and sent for medical assistance. A

fever shewed itself, and shortly afterwards the small-pox appeared. She became delirious in the course of the disorder; during which time, in the incoherence of insanity, she uttered a thousand wild expressions. As she called on many persons by name, whom she imagined she saw about her bed; it was supposed by such as attributed her dejection to love, that she fancied she beheld the object of her first passion, the Italian lover, who had always reigned in her affections. For some days before she died, no hopes of her recovery were entertained, and she expired on the 27th of November 1763, after struggling with her malady about a week. The Archduke her husband, who had attended her through every stage of the distemper, scarcely quitted her bedside till she breathed her last. Sinking under excess of grief, added to the fatigue which he had undergone, his attendants were obliged to carry him away by force from so affecting a scene. Joseph was long inconsolable for her loss, and still retains the warmest attachment to her memory. He loves to talk of her, to dwell

dwell on her praises, and to shew her picture, which he wears in the case of his watch, and which I have myself seen. The young Archduchess Theresa, according to her mother's prediction, died, as I have already mentioned, soon after she had completed her seventh year, in January 1770; a circumstance which naturally renewed his sorrow.

After so minute a recital of the pretended circumstances that preceded and accompanied the death of the Emperor's first wife, I feel it indispensable to subjoin my opinion of the degree of credit due to them. Certainly, if human testimony can prove any fact out of the ordinary course of nature, there is the strongest imaginable to be obtained in favour of the Archduchess's predictions; namely, that of the Empress Queen herself, of her daughters, of half the ladies of the Court of Vienna, and of many other most respectable individuals. It seems difficult to suppose, or to assign an adequate reason, why they should deceive themselves, or impose upon others. But we must make great allowance for Austrian credulity and

superstition. It is likewise to be remembered, that the Princess of Parma, from whatever cause, was unquestionably a woman of a nervous, melancholy habit, who always imagined that she saw death before her distempered fancy. When under the influence of low spirits, she said that she should not live long, and that her child would not survive her many years. If the events thus foretold, had not happened, they would have been ridiculed and forgotten. But, their accidental accomplishment gives them celebrity ; and when we add besides, the love of the marvellous, so common in human nature, we shall not find any thing very extraordinary or incredible, in the anecdotes above related.

Scarcely more than four months after the decease of his wife, in April 1764, the Archduke Joseph was elected and crowned King of the Romans ; an event which served equally to occupy the Imperial Court, and to dissipate its gloom. But, he was not easily induced to think of a second marriage, for every proposition of which nature he

expressed the strongest repugnance. Wearing by the importunities of his father the Emperor, more than induced by his mother's entreaties, and being himself desirous of male issue, he reluctantly consented at length to gratify their wishes. A considerable degree of embarrassment and uncertainty occurred, nevertheless, in the choice of a person to supply the place of the deceased Archduchess. There were many parties in the Court, and each had a favorite object of selection. Elizabeth of Brunswick, who was since married to the Prince Royal of Prussia, certainly nourished hopes or expectations of marrying the King of the Romans. She was mentioned to the Empress Queen, but, for whatever reason, the application failed of effect. The Princess Donna Benedicta of Portugal, youngest daughter of the late King Joseph the first, had very nearly been chosen for the Archduke. She was at that time just nineteen, beautiful in her person, and in all respects an eligible alliance. Some overtures, not amounting to a formal demand, were made

on the subject to the Court of Lisbon, which were favorably received. The Countess Tarocca, one of the late Emperor's most intimate friends and confidants, warmly recommended and supported the Portuguese Princess. Count Dietrichstein, Master of the Horse, enforced Madame de Tarocca's recommendation, and offered to go in person for her to Lisbon. But, Francis, informed that from her figure she did not seem likely to produce children, rejected the alliance ; a circumstance justly regretted in the sequel by himself, and by every one else.

After long indecision, the choice seemed, from necessity rather than inclination, to lie between two Princesses, Maria Josepha of Bavaria, and Maria Cunegonda of Saxony. The latter, who was youngest daughter of Augustus the Third, King of Poland, appeared for some time likely to obtain the preference. Her interests were strongly sustained by the Archduchess Christina, who being herself attached to Prince Albert of Saxony, naturally desired to cement by
every

every means the connexion with that family and country, as calculated eventually to facilitate her own wishes and objects. The Princess Cunegonda was born in November 1740, only four months before the King of the Romans. She had not indeed the pretensions to personal beauty, with which Voltaire has decorated her namesake, the daughter of the Baron de Thunder-ten-Tronck, in "Candide." But, neither was her Bavarian rival more favored by nature in that respect. Joseph consented to see her, in order to form an opinion, and subsequently consult his own inclinations. In the summer of the year 1764, it was contrived that they should meet, as if by accident, at a little hunting party, not far from the baths of Toplitz, in Bohemia, near the Saxon frontiers. Thither the Princess Cunegonda repairing on horseback, was met by the King of the Romans. Their interview was short, but decisive; Joseph having declined any further efforts to obtain her hand. As some sort of recompence

for so mortifying a rejection, the Court of Vienna has since interested itself in procuring her election as coadjutrix to the abbies of Essen and Thorn, about three years ago. It is curious to consider the wide interval between the lot of an Abbess and that of an Empress; between the obscure direction of a female convent, in a sequestered part of Germany, and the lustre of the Imperial Crown. But, the Saxon Princess has probably had reason to rejoice in an exclusion, which leaves her at least liberty, independence, and competence; while the unfortunate Bavarian, selected in her place, presented to the world a spectacle of the highest rank, united with the greatest misery.

Maria Josepha of Bavaria was two years older than her intended husband, having been born in March, 1739. Daughter to Charles the Seventh, Emperor of Germany, Maria Theresa's inveterate enemy and competitor at the commencement of her reign; she seemed to be precluded by her birth and
connexions,

connexions, from so close an alliance with the House of Austria. But, these antient hereditary animosities were overlooked from reasons of convenience, or obliterated by motives of state. Some vague expectations and claims upon the Bavarian succession, founded on the possible extinction of the then reigning line, in the person of the Elector Maximilian Joseph, brother to the Princess; conducted likewise, as is believed, to determine the choice in her favour. The event then foreseen, having since taken place, has given rise to the war which actually subsists between Austria and Prussia. While the marriage was still undetermined, the Empress Queen, desirous of hearing the private sentiments entertained by those about her, relative to the persons of the two Princesses, Saxon and Bavarian, took occasion to consult a Nobleman of the Court on the subject; requesting him to inform her candidly, which of them he would prefer, if it was his own case. As he had seen them both, and was a professed admirer of female charms,

charms, no man could be more able to form a judgment. But, though he was accustomed to converse with her Majesty in the most unre-served manner, and to speak very freely to her on almost every topic; he felt the question to be peculiarly delicate, and therefore wished to decline giving either his opinion or advice. Maria Theresa pressing him nevertheless to speak his sentiments, and assuring him that he could not offend her by any remarks or observations, however severe; "Jevousavoue
" donc, Madame, answered he, que si j'étois
" le maitre de mes actions, je ne voudrois ni
" l'une ni l'autre de ces Princesses: mais, le
" couteau au gosier, et devant absolument en
" prendre une, je choisirois plutôt la Bava-
" roise, parceque au moins a t'elle de gorge."
The Empress, far from being prudish, or affecting any gravity on the occasion, laughed heartily at the reason assigned for his preference, which she admitted to be excellent, and by no means devoid of foundation. The Nobleman to whom I allude, related to me himself, this anecdote.

On

On the fifteenth of January 1765, the Princess Maria Josepha having arrived at Vienna from Munich, the marriage ceremony was immediately performed, without even allowing her previously to change her dress, which was a riding habit. I am assured by ladies who were present at the nuptials, that she was at that time by no means an object of distaste or aversion; though she possessed neither the elegance of manners, nor the accomplishments of her predecessor, the Infanta of Parma. Her husband himself, as far as external appearances indicated, seemed to be not dissatisfied with her; and it was hoped that the pleasing or conciliating qualities of her mind and disposition, might compensate for the want of personal attractions. Even her enemies admit that she was amiable, obliging, affable to all, and disposed to every kind or benevolent sentiment; but, her understanding was narrow, as well as deficient in cultivation. Humble and respectful to a degree of obsequiousness in her behaviour towards Joseph, whom she loved with

with ardor, she vainly tried by every means to acquire some interest in his affections. Her careffes and her fondness only tended still more to alienate from her his heart.

I do not consider myself at liberty to divulge all that I may know, or may have heard, relative to the person of the unfortunate Princess in question; nor, from the peculiarity of the subject, could such a disclosure be made without wounding decorum. It is certain that she had natural defects, which prevented the accomplishment of the great object of the alliance; namely, her producing children. These defects, from their very nature, could not, or ought not, to have been unknown to the Elector of Bavaria her brother; and it was perhaps no less injudicious, than it was in fact dishonorable, not to have declared them previous to the treaty of marriage. By the confession of the King of the Romans himself, the nuptials were scarcely consummated, though she was once believed to be with child; and on that account, or under that pretext, when the rest of the Imperial

Imperial Family went into the Tyrol, in the summer of the year 1765, she remained behind at Vienna. But, all expectation of issue from this inauspicious union having soon vanished, Joseph even ceased to cohabit with her, and expressed towards her only disgust. The recollection of his first wife, naturally increased his dislike to the second, of which he made no secret to those with whom he lived on terms of intimacy. As if to complete the misfortune of the Queen of the Romans, a violent scorbutic humour, that covered her face and body with eruptions, rendered it impossible to approach her without sentiments of repugnance. Joseph, in the bitterness of his vexation, frequently lamented his destiny, which had united him to such a Princess. A Lady of the Court, with whom he lived in the closest friendship, and who, from her virtues, as well as from the superiority of her mind, merited all his confidence; has assured me, that he used frequently to come to her, in order, by her consoling conversation and society, to endeavour to dissipate his chagrin. Disclosing
to

to her his domestic vexations, and contrasting the personal as well as mental qualities of his first and second wife; "Ma femme," said he, "me devient insupportable. Je n'y résiste plus. On veut que j'ai des enfans. Le moyen d'en avoir? Encore, si je pourrois mettre le bout du doigt sur la plus petite partie de son corps, qui n'étoit pas couverte de boutons, je tacherois d'avoir des enfans." Anne of Cleves could not have been more odious to Henry the Eighth, than was the Bavarian Princess to Joseph the Second.

Of all the Imperial Family, the Emperor Francis alone treated her with tenderness, protected and sheltered her. The goodness of his heart, and the mildness of his nature, inclined him to pity a wretched Princess, who was much more an object of compassion, than of detestation. But, his death, which took place only seven months after her marriage, filled up the measure of her misfortunes. On the arrival of the intelligence of that event from Inspruck at Vienna, she wept bitterly,

bitterly, often exclaiming in the anguish of her feelings, " Ah ! Malheureuse ! j'ai perdue " mon seul Appui !" Joseph, by his father's decease, became Emperor of Germany ; but the increase of her dignity produced no amelioration whatsoever of the young Empress's private condition. During the remainder of her life, which was only a series of privations and mortifications, she saw herself neglected, despised and abandoned. Even her mother-in-law, the Empress Queen, though naturally beneficent and kind to all, yet is said to have behaved towards her with coldness. The Archduchess Christina, who had always opposed the alliance, was at no pains to conceal her aversion for the Bavarian Princess. Joseph, neither mollified by her submission, nor touched by her attachment, continued to treat her with contemptuous neglect ; though her consciousness of being displeasing to him was such, and her apprehension of him so strong, that she would tremble and turn pale, whenever he entered the room.

Death

Death at length released them from their mutual wretchedness. The young Empress sickened of the small-pox, in the month of May 1767, and the symptoms, from the beginning, were considered to be of the most alarming nature. Maria Theresa herself caught the distemper from her daughter-in-law, but finally recovered. As long as his mother remained in health, the Emperor excused himself from visiting his wife, under pretence that he should incur the danger of communicating to the Empress Queen so fatal a disorder. It was in vain that the unhappy Princess, apprehensive of her approaching end, ardently requested once more to see her husband. She even wrote to him, as it is said, to demand this last proof of his regard. Joseph still continued inflexible; but, after his mother had contracted the same malady, there remained no longer any decent excuse for his refusal. He then visited the dying Empress, and expressed his concern for her situation. The species of small-pox which she had

con-

contracted, was of so malignant a kind, that it is affirmed, she mortified in many parts of her body before death. Portions of her face became black and putrid ; so that had she even survived, she would probably have become an object too hideous for sight. Under such circumstances, her dissolution, which took place on the 28th of May 1767, could only be regarded by all as a fortunate release. It is not a little singular, that the two wives of Joseph the Second should both have been carried off by the same distemper, in the course of three years and a half ; after having constituted, one his felicity, and the other his misfortune. He has constantly rejected all propositions of entering a third time into the married state, and it is believed that he will persist in his determination.

During the life of the first Archduchess, to whom he was tenderly attached, Joseph was never supposed to feel a distinguishing preference for any other woman. Even after her decease, he remained so long a

prey to grief, that the Empress Queen herself did not scruple to encourage and request the most beautiful or accomplished women of the Court, to endeavour to rouse him from his dejection. His second marriage far from renewing the happiness that he had experienced in the first, only rendered him by comparison more wretched. In such a situation, it was no less natural than venial, that he should form an attachment, at least of mind, to some object. Among the ladies of the highest quality at Vienna, might justly be accounted Mademoiselle de Battiani. As she was the daughter of Marshal Prince Battiani, who had been Joseph's governor, their acquaintance commenced at a very early period of their lives. Her person, if not beautiful, was elegant and interesting; her mind and manners pleasing, no less than accomplished. When very young, she had been married to Count Windischgratz, a match which was always considered as one formed by mutual inclination.

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Driven by domestic infelicity to find consolation and amusement abroad, the Emperor, during several years, previous, as well as subsequent, to the death of his second wife, shewed towards Madame de Windischgratz the most constant and distinguishing attention. In a select society with her, the Countess Esterhazy her sister, and a few others of both sexes, he was accustomed to pass most of his evenings. Among the number of persons usually admitted, was Count Chotek, for whom it was supposed that she felt a much greater partiality than for Joseph. But, as she always treated his Imperial Majesty with marks of regard and predilection, he appears neither to have felt or expressed any jealousy on that account. His passion, if such it can with propriety be denominated, was unquestionably not of a nature to exact any sacrifices incompatible with female honor. Whether the moderation of his desires, or the virtue of the Countess, formed her best security, it is certain that her character never

suffered any just attain't from the Emperor's assiduities. They had for their principal, if not sole object, her conversation and society. Content with this intercourse, he probably aspired to nothing beyond it, and was rather to be considered as her friend and companion, than as her lover.

Madame de Windischgratz's health and constitution, which were naturally delicate, having suffered so much from the severe climate and penetrating winds of Austria, that she was menaced with a consumption, the baths and air of Pisa were recommended by the Physicians. She accordingly repaired thither some years ago, accompanied by her husband. After passing about twelve months in Italy, she returned to Vienna, apparently in perfect health, and completely recovered. Far from appearing to have sustained any diminution by absence, on the contrary, the Emperor's attachment and attentions redoubled towards her. But, with the approach of winter, her complaints, which had lain dormant for

some months, reviving with violence, soon assumed a dangerous aspect; and all the symptoms of a confirmed disorder of the lungs manifested themselves. In this situation, Joseph shewed her proofs of partiality, which while they did honor to the goodness of his heart, sufficiently proved that his attachment had for its principal object, qualities unconnected with personal beauty. As she was rendered by her malady unable to partake of public diversions, or even to appear in company, he used to pass almost every evening at her house. In the months of February and March 1777, when her cough had so enfeebled her, that she was no longer in a state to converse, he not only continued his visits, but in order to amuse and enliven her, was accustomed to read to her for several hours at a time.

Soon afterwards, in April 1777, being then about to visit France, he went on the morning of his departure, to take a last leave of Madame de Windischgratz: an interview which must have been extremely pain-

ful, as both were equally conscious that they should probably see each other no more. A lady of the Court told me, that she accidentally passed the Emperor, as he was ascending the staircase which led to the Countess's apartment. She added, that he stooped, with intent to speak to her, but his voice, which was almost choked, betrayed his agitation and distress. In effect, they never met again, as Madame de Windischgratz died in the following month. It is natural to suppose that Joseph must have been very deeply sensible to such an event. I am nevertheless assured, that if he was so, he expressed at least no extraordinary concern, nor manifested much emotion on receiving the intelligence; a circumstance only to be explained by supposing that he could not be ignorant of, or unprepared for it, the nature of her disorder leaving no hope of her recovery. When the information reached him, it must likewise be recollected that he was distant from her, and surrounded at Paris by a thousand objects, calculated

calculated to occupy his mind, or distract his attention.

Whatever was the nature of the Emperor's attachment to her, whether it partook most of esteem, of friendship, or of tenderness; his heart appears to have been by no means shut against other female impressions, even during her life. . . Previous to her decease, he had already manifested a strong partiality for the Princess Charles Lichtenstein, who, if she did not supplant Madame de Wintzschgratz in his Majesty's affections, at least occupied a very distinguished place in his regard. When the latter was no more, Joseph transferred all his attentions to the Princess, and they continue to subsist at this moment in their full force. She is daughter of the Count of Oettingue-Spielberg, and may be now four-and-thirty years of age. As long ago as the year 1761, she married Prince Charles Lichtenstein, one of the most gallant, amiable, and handsome noblemen of the Imperial Court. Her person is pleasing, and though her features cannot be
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esteemed regular, their expression is admirable. Her mouth is peculiarly beautiful, and over her whole figure is diffused an air of modesty, intelligence, and dignity, rarely blended in any woman. She possesses besides, an enlarged and cultivated mind, a fund of amusing conversation, and powers of entertaining, as well as improving, very superior to the generality of her sex in Vienna. In mentioning these particulars, I speak in some measure from my own knowledge, added to information, as I have the honor to be personally acquainted with her.

Flattered as she unquestionably is with the partiality, and gratified by the attentions of the first Crowned Head in Europe, she has invariably acted with such caution and regard to her own honor, as to maintain unimpeached the purity of her character. No person here ventures to suppose, and still less to assert, that she has made to him any concession inconsistent with the strictest virtue. She is the object of Joseph's affection and friendship ;

ship; not his mistress. Those who know her, entertain the firmest conviction, that even if the Emperor's solicitations were ever so strong, yet her sense of what she owes to her family and herself, added to a religious and serious turn of mind, would render her superior to seduction. But, Joseph's attachment to her is not personal, in the ordinary acceptation of the term; though it may be difficult to say what are the precise limits which his moderation, or her principles, affix to the connexion. She rarely, or never receives him alone, though she sees him continually at her own house, as well as in private society. Even at the theatre, a lady constantly remains in the box with her, when his Majesty is there. A conduct, which is the reverse of the late Emperor's; who, when he was in the Princess of Auerberg's box, never admitted any intrusion, and locked it on the inside. It is in the conversation of the Princess Charles Lichtenstein, that Joseph finds the most pleasing relaxation from public business, as well

well as from private disquietude; and this confidence probably forms the principal tie by which they are united. She disclaims even the smallest political influence or credit with the Emperor. I have heard her do so; while he, on his side, frequently cites as a maxim from which no Sovereign should deviate; that "Princes never ought to allow a woman, let her merit or talents be what they may, to acquire an ascendancy over their affections, on account of the political consequences which almost always result from such a passion."

At this very time, his Imperial Majesty usually passes four evenings every week, with the Princess Charles Lichtenstein, and a little circle chiefly composed of females. The ladies are, besides the Princess herself, her sister, the Countess Ernest Kaunitz, her sister-in-law, the Princess Francis Lichtenstein, and the two Princesses Clari and Kinski. Marshal Lacy, who has been attached near twenty years to the Princess Francis Lichtenstein, is generally admitted
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into this select society; and Count Rosenberg, the Lord Chamberlain, is likewise, sometimes, of the party. He is one of the most pleasing noblemen of the Imperial Court; who, under a gold exterior, conceals qualities equally solid and ingratiating. Polished in his manners, cultivated in his understanding, and highly acceptable to his master; if he possessed ambition equal to his talents, it is probable, that he might, at some future time, act a conspicuous part on the political theatre. But, his love of pleasure, joined to the indolence of his temper, will retain him always in the shade. Neither Prince Charles Lichtenstein, nor his brother Prince Francis, ever presume to invade this Coterie, though their wives compose its most interesting parts. The French Ambassador, Monsieur de Breteuil, at his particular request, was once or twice allowed to be present there. Finding however that his intrusion was not acceptable to the Emperor, and that it imposed a degree of restraint

straint on the pleasures of the company, he withdrew himself, and returned no more.

The persons above named, male and female, meet alternately at each other's houses, to which Joseph repairs with the utmost privacy, unattended and alone. I know that he himself constitutes the principal entertainment of the party, and its chief occupation. He commonly talks, while the ladies listen and admire. Lacy, as well as Rosemberg, are probably too experienced Courtiers, to invade so sacred a prerogative. Cards are never brought, for the Emperor dislikes them; the last time that he ever sat down to play, having been in 1764; after his coronation at Francfort. It is true that the ladies, desirous of varying the evening amusement, attempted, some time ago, to introduce a book, by way of change; but, the experiment did not succeed. Joseph prefers conversation. On the three evenings of the week, which he does not pass in the above-mentioned society; unless prevented by public business, he commonly

monly goes for a short time to the Princess Esterhazy's, or to Madame de Burckhausen's. During the course of the present winter, unlike the last, he has shewn himself rarely at Prince Kaunitz's, or in any numerous companies.

Joseph the Second is rather above than below the middle size, and in no degree inclined to corpulency. Though not handsome, he may be accounted agreeable in his person, and when young, he must have been elegant. Those persons who saw him on the day of his nuptials with the Princess of Parma, when he was magnificently habited in the old Spanish dress, which was calculated to add to the natural advantages of his figure; assert, that they never beheld a finer youth. The Countess of Pergen, who was a spectatress of his coronation at Francfort in 1764, has declared to me, that he appeared to her the most majestic and striking object on which she ever looked, when he was invested with the royal robes and Insignia; his thick hair falling down
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over his back in ringlets. He had then a head of hair, such as is ascribed to Apollo by the Poets. So bald is he now become at only thirty-eight, that on the crown of his head, scarcely any covering remains; and in order to conceal the defect, he wears a false toupee. His queue is very thin, but it is his own, and not an artificial one, like that of the Great Frederic.

The Emperor's countenance is full of meaning and intelligence. I have rarely seen a more speaking physiognomy; and it is impossible to look at him, without conceiving a favourable idea of his understanding. His eye, which is quick, sparkles with animation. The contour of his face is long and thin; his complexion fair, his nose aquiline, his teeth white, even, and good. An air of mind, which is spread over his features, pleases and prejudices in his favour. The formation of his body and legs is by no means without defect, though he is capable of severe exercise, and of sustaining great fatigue. Nor can his general state of health be accounted

counted such; as to afford a reasonable prospect of his attaining to very advanced age. Besides the aneurism in his leg, which I have formerly mentioned, he has another extraordinary source of disease; it is an excrescence, of the nature of a wen, on the crown of his head, which naturally increases in size, and may become dangerous in process of time. Conscious of the hazard that he must incur, if it should grow large, or suppurate; he has already consulted Brambilla his surgeon, on the subject, who means to extract it with the knife: an operation, which it is probable will not be long delayed.

No Prince can be more indifferent than the Emperor, with regard to all the delicacies, indulgences, and luxuries of life. Few sovereigns devote so much time to business, and so little to pleasure or dissipation. It is very rare that he ever makes any person wait, who comes to him by appointment. "I was accustomed," says he, "to pass too many hours in my father's antichamber, not to know from experience, how

“ how unpleasant such a detention must be to others.” Francis by no means observed the same punctuality in giving audience. Joseph rises early, and takes for breakfast either coffee and milk, or chocolate, with which he mixes water, seldom eating any thing at that time. In order to dispatch public business with more facility, he generally dines alone; his dinner being dressed in the great kitchen of the palace; for he has no private kitchen. His meal, except on meagre days, or in Lent, consists of five dishes; a soup, Bouillie, vegetables, a Fricassee, and a Roti. These are brought to his apartment in five deep dishes, placed one upon the other, as the “*Traiteurs*” are used to do; and when ready, they are laid on the stove which heats the room, in order to keep them warm. The nominal hour for his dinner is two o’clock, but frequently he is so occupied, that he does not sit down till five; and he then swallows it half cold, with only a single servant to attend on him. Though he eats heartily, it is without any degree

degree of delicacy, or selection ; and he is so indifferent about every thing relating to the table, that he scarcely distinguishes game from poultry. Wine he rarely touches ; and when he does, only in very small quantity.

• While the Emperor is at dinner, he generally talks to the person who waits on him, and afterwards frequently resumes the business of the day. This is his constant mode of life here in Vienna, scarcely ever unbending in the society of a few friends : a part of his character by no means amiable, and in which he certainly does not either imitate or resemble the great philosopher of “ Sans Souci,” who tempers the cares of royalty by the practice of Horace and Anacreon ; by the circulation of the glass, and the company of men of letters, genius, or taste. Joseph’s repasts are solitary, soon finished, and destitute of gaiety and conviviality. When travelling, or on a campaign, he relaxes however from this severity, eats with the officers or noblemen about his person,

and though extremely temperate in every respect, yet he is communicative, lively, and entertaining at table.

In bodily accomplishments the Emperor is not deficient; supplying in activity what he wants either in skill or address. He rides well, plays at Tennis, and is fond of hunting, or rather of shooting. The exercises as well as diversions peculiarly characteristic of youth, he no longer considers as proper for his time of life; and that of dancing in particular, he has long renounced. When Archduke, he danced extremely well; and even since his accession to the Imperial dignity, he has not declined it on particular occasions. The last time that he danced publicly at Court, was soon after the death of his second wife, about eleven years ago, in a superb "Ballet," with several of the young nobility of both sexes. His partner was the Archduchess Amelia, since married to the Duke of Parma, and who was then one of the most beautiful Princesses in Europe. He wore a superb fancy dress; and
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a circumstance which seems very contradictory to the other features of his character is, that he not only put on Rouge himself, but commanded all the gentlemen who danced in the "Ballet" with him to do the same.

The late Emperor Francis, though superficial and ignorant in the essential branches of education or improvement, yet possessed many qualities calculated to dazzle and conciliate mankind. He was a liberal protector of all the fine arts, particularly Music, Painting, and Sculpture. Nor did he fail to expend very considerable sums in the encouragement, or the support of artists eminent in those walks. Joseph, on the contrary, appeared to be wholly insensible to the arts, not only before his father's death, but, for a considerable time subsequent to that event. So little taste had he for painting, that he usually turned his back with contempt on the finest productions of the great masters, Flemish or Italian. Though endowed by nature with an excellent ear,

he betrayed no partiality even for music. For sedentary occupations, for reading, and the improvement that results from the study of polite letters, he manifested a total disinclination. By degrees, however, his indifference for works of genius has diminished. He found it impossible to visit Italy, and to become familiar with the monuments of art profusely scattered over that beautiful country, without catching some portion of enthusiasm. On his return from Rome and Florence, some years ago, he began gradually to display this change in his character; by causing the finest pieces of painting to be collected from all the palaces of the Empress Queen, and brought to the "Belvedere." He even superintended in person, and directed the placing of the most capital pictures in the gallery of the above-mentioned palace. Prince Kaunitz piques himself on having, by his example and exhortations, awakened, directed, and formed the Emperor's taste. He is no longer insensible to the charms of music; and at this time has pri-

vate concerts frequently in his own apartments, where he and his brother the Great Duke of Tuscany perform in person. On the harpsichord Joseph plays in a masterly manner, accompanying the instrument with his voice ; and he is no mean performer on the violin. But, as a patron of learning, or of the fine arts, it must nevertheless be admitted, that he neither manifests the same passion, nor extends to them the same munificent protection, which distinguished his father.

By the demise of the late Emperor, he succeeded, without farther form of election, to the Imperial dignity ; and he was at the same time constituted by Maria Theresa, co-regent of all the hereditary dominions of the House of Austria ; an example which has hitherto neither been imitated by Catherine the Second in Russia, nor by Mary of Braganza in Portugal. Those Princesses, though both of them have sons already at an age to mix in council, or to assume an active part in state-affairs ; yet, far from associating them to the Government, have on the con-

trary retained the whole royal authority in their own hands. Perhaps there are moments, when the Empress Queen may regret that she has delegated any portion of her power to her son. Unquestionably they have differed in sentiment, on more than one important measure; and Frederic well knows that it is Joseph, not Maria Theresa, with whom he is in fact contending at this hour, for the Bavarian succession. She remains indeed the efficient Sovereign, and is considered as such by her subjects. But the degree of dignity and consequence which is annexed to the Imperial Crown, added to the consideration of her sex, age; and increasing infirmities, conduce to give to the Emperor very great and indefinite powers, both at home and abroad. Her maternal fondness has conferred, and the activity, combined with the ambition of his character, impel him to exercise many prerogatives, which in strictness cannot be his till after her decease. It is difficult, perhaps impossible to define, what are the precise limits of their
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their respective prerogatives; but many acts of state evidently originate with, and are promulgated by Joseph, rather than by Maria Theresa. They bear the stamp of his mind, which only waited for the signal of his father's death, to develope and expand itself in a certain degree. I shall illustrate this observation, which I have already made elsewhere, by an enumeration of some of the leading measures of Joseph since 1765, in his capacity of Emperor of Germany, as well as in that of co-regent of Hungary and Bohemia. It is by following these guides, that we shall be best able to form an estimate of his real character, disposition, and talents.

The first act of his administration, though one which was rather personal than political, merited great eulogiums, and tended to convey an elevated idea of his way of thinking on pecuniary points. The late Emperor, who always considered himself as a foreigner, left not only various landed estates in Germany and Hungary, purchased with his own money

during his life ; but, likewise, a considerable sum in ready cash, all which descended to his eldest son. Joseph retained the lands, but he instantly gave up the money, amounting to some millions of florins, as a fund for paying the debts of the Crown ; thus leaving himself, in some measure, dependent on the bounty of his mother. Such a proof that he felt no separate or private interest distinct from that of the State, necessarily impressed his subjects with respect for his character, and is never mentioned here without a just tribute of praise.

This act of disinterestedness was immediately succeeded by another, calculated to acquire universal popularity, and to conciliate in a peculiar manner the affections of the lower ranks. On the north of Vienna are situated two very extensive parks, or gardens ; one called the “ Prater,” the other the “ Hof Garten,” almost adjoining the city itself. As both were the immediate property of the Empress Queen, none except persons of quality were ever allowed

to enter them ; and even that favored order enjoyed that privilege only during particular months of the year. Joseph, instantly after his accession, threw open both these pleasure-gardens, and gave the most ample permission to every person, of whatever description, to walk or ride in them, at all seasons. The game laws have likewise been relaxed, and leave has been granted to the peasants to fire on, and destroy the wild boars ; animals, which, under the late reign, were regarded as sacred, and who committed with impunity the greatest ravages on the lands of the farmers. This edict excited no little discontent among the nobility ; but its effects on the inferior orders may be easily conceived. Other regulations, favourable to the personal emancipation of the latter class from the severity of feudal rights, and tending to diminish the power of the great landed proprietors, have since been issued by the Emperor.

All his measures seem more or less obviously directed to suppress expence, and to expedite

expedite or facilitate the dispatch of public business in every department. Francis loved diversions, entertainments, and the splendor of royalty; Joseph resembles him in none of these respects. During the late reign, there always existed a French theatre in Vienna; but, as the concourse of people who resorted to it, was not sufficiently numerous to defray the expences of the house, gaming-tables were permitted by Government. Every Faro table paid ten ducats, or about four guineas, to the managers of the theatre; and from this source, aided by the Emperor's private liberality, the French Comedy derived a great part of its support. His present Majesty published an "Ordonnance," on his attaining the Imperial dignity, by which, Faro, and every other Game of Hazard, previously allowed at the French Theatre, were prohibited. The necessary consequence of such a regulation, was the loss of the Comedy itself, which could no longer subsist, unless by a pecuniary gratification from the private purse
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of the Sovereign, which he did not think proper to bestow on a company of foreign comedians.

From the Theatre, Joseph proceeded to regulate the Court, and all the public offices. During the late Emperor's life, the number of birth-days and Gala-days observed at Court, was prodigious, amounting to near forty in a year. All the nobility, ministers, and great officers, civil as well as military, appeared at the drawing-room on those occasions; and the expence necessarily incurred by the splendid suits worn, was frequently productive of serious inconvenience. One of the first acts of Joseph was totally to abolish both Gala and birth-days. He appointed at the same time, the first of January, as the anniversary on which all the nobility should kiss the Empress Queen's and his hand; prohibiting any sort of public notice to be taken, or any attention to be paid to all other days without exception. He even enforces so rigid an observance of this order, as not to permit his immediate servants
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and attendants to express the least mark of festivity, or to make the slightest alteration in their ordinary dress, on his own birth-day.

Till the death of Francis in 1765, the old Spanish habit, derived from the time of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, was universally worn at the Court of Vienna, on all days of Gala or of ceremony. Francis, who scarcely ever appeared in a uniform; was accustomed to change his dresses very frequently, and affected magnificence of apparel. Joseph has never worn any coat except a uniform, since his father's decease. The Spanish habit, though splendid and imposing, connected it with many inconveniences: among others, long prescription had authorized, that the Aulic Counsellors never could meet for the dispatch of business, except in that dress. Of course, affairs of importance were frequently postponed, and even sacrificed to an absurd Etiquette. The present Emperor, conscious of the abuse, and of the public detriment that resulted from

from it, forbade the use of the Spanish dress on any occasion whatever. He commanded the Aulic Counsellors, from that time forward, not only to assemble in their ordinary dress; but even obliged the members to meet after dinner, as well as in the morning, for the more prompt transaction of affairs.

In external address Joseph the Second is not deficient. His manners are easy, his conversation lively, voluble, and entertaining; running rapidly from one subject to another, and displaying frequently a vast variety of knowledge. Perhaps he manifests too great a consciousness of possessing extensive information; and he may be reproached likewise with frequently anticipating the answers of the persons with whom he converses. A mixture of vanity and of impetuosity conduce to this defect. While he talks, especially if eager, he always plays with the money in his pocket. He writes with ease, perspicuity, and propriety. I have seen many of his notes, evidently composed without premeditation, addressed
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to persons who enjoyed his confidence, both men and women. They demonstrate feeling, enlargement of mind, and as I have thought, goodness of heart. Yet I know, from indisputable authority, that he is a profound dissembler, rarely or never speaking his real sentiments upon any point of moment. On the other hand, he certainly permits those whom he loves or esteems, to deal fairly with him; to tell him not only plain, but painful truths; and even to reprehend him on occasion with severity.

I have reason to think, that his religious opinions are by no means contracted or illiberal. The bigotry and superstition which for ages have been hereditary in the House of Austria, and which still survive in all their force in Maria Theresa, will probably be extinct in her successor. But, I am so far from meaning to insinuate that he is on that account tinctured with infidelity, deism, or any of the doctrines inculcated at Ferney, and at "Sans Souci;" that the very reverse is the fact. When he passed through
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Switzerland, he declined seeing or visiting Voltaire ; not less, I believe, from his own choice, than at his mother's request. Joseph, though no bigot, is a Catholic, convinced of the great truths of the Christian Religion, and conforming to many, if not to all its injunctions in his practice. He not only confesses regularly, but as soon as he rises, he never fails every morning, on his knees to offer up his prayers to the Divine Being ; as he does in the same devout posture, before he retires to rest. I cannot err in this fact, which I derive from an eye-witness of the highest rank, who would neither flatter nor deceive. If, in the enumeration of so many minute particulars, I may have related some which seem discordant or contradictory, it must be remembered that man is composed of inconsistencies, and ever at variance with himself.

At no period of his life has the present Emperor been a libertine, or addicted to excesses of women, as was Francis his father, and as his brother Leopold is well known to be at this time. For the Countess Windischgratz, and for the Princess Charles Lichtenstein,

stein, he probably never nourished any sentiment except friendship, cemented by affectionate esteem and confidence. Assiduous, rather than tender; moderate in all his desires, and content with the society of his mistress, he is a companion, not a lover. His amours, when he has had any, have always been of short duration, managed with privacy, unaccompanied either with scandal or expence, and entailing no consequences. Yet, in a crowd, under shelter of the night, where he conceives that he is neither known nor observed, he likes to accost women of inferior condition, and perhaps to take some harmless liberties with their person, which is usually the utmost extent of his gallantry.

As the Emperor has no mistress, so he has in reality no favorite. Several persons who have seemed to be so for a time, and who have believed themselves in possession of his personal affection, have been deceived. General Nostitz, whom he distinguished exceedingly during a certain period, has proved the truth of this assertion. The two Counts, Cobenzel, and Joseph

Joseph Colloredo, both of whom accompanied him to Paris in 1777, possess, it is true, much of his esteem and confidence; but, they are not favorites. Count Dietrichstein, from long habits of familiarity with the Emperor, added to the spirit of independence, the frankness, and gaiety of disposition, which eminently characterize him, enjoys, and exercises perhaps more than any nobleman of the Court, the privilege of speaking truth to his Master. That his Majesty honors, as well as respects Laudohn, and consults him on every military point of importance, is unquestionable. For Lacy he reserves his friendship, visits him at all hours, converses with him unreservedly, and communicates to him his most secret thoughts.

Joseph and Frederic, unlike the generality of Princes who know each other only by report, are personally acquainted, having twice met in their respective dominions. The first of these two celebrated interviews, took place about four years after the death

of the late Emperor Francis, when his present Majesty was not nine-and-twenty. It may be said to have originated with the King of Prussia, who desirous, no doubt or forming his own opinion, (after a close and accurate inspection,) on the character and talents of the new head of the Empire, caused it to be signified at the Court of Vienna, that a meeting between them would be highly agreeable to himself. The proposal having pleased, Count Dietrichstein, Master of the Horse, was sent to Breslau, to confer with Frederic, and to settle all the preliminaries. Neiss, a town in Silesia, was fixed on for the place of rendezvous, whither Joseph repaired in September 1769, accompanied by his brother-in-law Prince Albert of Saxony, Marshal Lacy, General Laudohn, Count Dietrichstein, and several other noblemen or military officers.

Arriving in his carriage, just before the hour of dinner, he was received by Frederic, at the foot of the staircase of the house which he occupied at Neiss; and after mutually gazing on each other for a single moment,

moment they embraced, with demonstrations of reciprocal pleasure. Each Sovereign having presented to the other the persons who accompanied him; among whom, on the side of his Prussian Majesty, were the Prince Royal his nephew, the Hereditary Prince of Brunswic, and several general officers; the two Monarchs sat down immediately to a table of about thirty covers. Frederic was in excellent humor, and Joseph appeared to be equally happy. About thirty thousand Prussian troops had been assembled, in order to entertain the Emperor; and Frederic taking the command of them in person, performed a variety of manœuvres, with which his guest expressed the utmost satisfaction. They passed three days together, during the whole of which time Joseph was lodged at an inn in the town. A miserable company of German comedians, brought thither for the purpose, served, if not to enliven, at least to pass away the evenings. In the daytime, the two Sovereigns rode out side by

side, and conversed with great familiarity; but, from the moment of their meeting, to that of their separation, they never were alone together, except once for about ten minutes. On the fourth morning they parted, mutually impressed with a favorable idea of each other, and on terms of apparent amity. Political business was not ever mentioned on either side, nor was it intended to form any part of the interview. Joseph has been accused, I believe, without just reason, of treating the Hereditary Prince of Brunswic with coldness at Neifs. Even had he felt any ill-will towards that illustrious person, he is too skilful a dissembler, to make it probable that he would manifest his dislike on such an occasion, and before such spectators.

The first interview between Frederic and Joseph, unquestionably arose principally from the curiosity natural to both Sovereigns, to see and to converse with each other. But, the second meeting was meant for more concealed and important purposes.

It took place just a year later, in the first days of September 1770, at the little town of Neustadt in Moravia, to which place his Prussian Majesty came, in order to return the visit. Unlike the Emperor, though far more advanced in years, he performed the journey from Breslau entirely on horseback; accompanied as before, by his two nephews, the Hereditary Princes of Prussia and Brunswic, together with a number of general officers. Desirous of ingratiating himself with Joseph, whose consent and co-operation he wanted in the projected partition of Poland, he arrived at Neustadt, habited in an Austrian regimental. Not only the King himself, but, all the persons with him, were dressed in white uniforms, with facings or lapels, such as in the Imperial service are usually given to recruits, before they are put altogether in full uniform. That of Frederic was distinguished from the rest, by being embroidered at the button-holes with silver. When he dismounted from his horse, Joseph was ready to receive him; and after they

had embraced, as at Neifs, the King pointing to those who attended him, said, "Votre Majesté verra que je lui ai amené des recrues." The delicacy of such a compliment, which could not be overlooked or misunderstood, tended to produce mutual good humor on their first meeting.

During the whole course of the repast which followed, Frederic studiously observed a degree of respect towards the Emperor, making a motion as if to rise, every time that a plate was set before him, and offering it first to Joseph, as his superior. But, it was towards Prince Kaunitz that he exerted all his endeavours to please, to conciliate, and to captivate. That Minister, duped by the offers, or gained by the blandishments of Prussia, had accompanied his master, for the express purpose of settling the preliminaries, and adjusting the terms on which Poland was to be dismembered. I have already entered fully on the subject elsewhere, and shall not, therefore, resume it here. Frederic completely succeeded in his object, and the fate of the

Poles was decided at Neustadt. Amusements, military as well as theatrical, served to veil the secret of state from common eyes. Joseph in his turn had assembled thirty thousand troops, for the inspection of his royal guest, who passed them in review, and bestowed on them high encomiums. Unfortunately, the weather, during the whole time that the interview lasted, was so rainy, as greatly to diminish the pleasure of the two Sovereigns. Both were repeatedly wet to the skin; and Frederic, on his return from the field, having no other coat with him than the one which he wore, was obliged to strip, and to remain a prisoner in his own room, till his coat could be dried at the fire. This event produced no little merriment.

The Emperor made every possible exertion to amuse and entertain his Prussian Majesty, while at Neustadt. A private house, the best that could be procured in the town, was fitted up for his reception: in place of a strolling company of German comedians,

an Italian opera was performed; and No. verre, with all his "Figurantés," were brought from Vienna at a considerable expence, to dance the "Ballets." Frederic, with consummate address, always placed Prince Kaunitz between himself and Joseph, when at the theatre, and shewed the Austrian Prime Minister a thousand attentions. After the performance, the political conferences were held. During the two first days, no cloud arose to indispose the two Monarchs towards each other; but on the third, the King received letters by a courier from Peterburgh, the nature of which he did not immediately communicate to the Emperor, who conceiving that he had a right to know their tenor, manifested some ill-humor at their concealment. Frederic then grew in turn sour, and out of temper. In this frame of mind they separated next morning, alienated from each other as much as they had been prepossessed favorably at their first interview. But, Poland was not less sacrificed, within two years afterwards, to their mutual

mutual ambition. These particulars are derived from the best information.

Among the characteristic features of Joseph, must be accounted his passion for travelling ; scarcely any Prince of whom we read, having so minutely examined his own dominions. Adrian, in antiquity, and Charles the Fifth, in modern ages, whose whole reigns were a perpetual journey, can alone be compared in this point of view, to the present Emperor. He has visited nearly all the Courts of Italy ; and when he went to Paris, two years ago, it was his intention to have prosecuted his tour as far as Madrid, if not to Lisbon. With that design he traversed the whole kingdom of France, and was already arrived at St. Sebastian in Biscay, on his way to the capital of Spain ; when a courier from Vienna, informing him that the Empress Queen was greatly indisposed, and that his return was necessary, compelled him to desist from his further progress. Every part of Bohemia, Hungary, and Transylvania, he has rode over, almost
at

at a footpace: nor has he omitted to inspect the Sclavonian frontier, as far as Semlin; and to go in a boat upon the Danube, to the walls, and quite under the cannon of Belgrade. Of all the extensive territories, scattered over so great a portion of Europe, which will devolve to him at the death of Maria Theresa, the Austrian Netherlands alone, he has not yet surveyed in person. Along the Turkish, as well as on the Saxon and Silesian borders, he has caused forts to be erected, and has taken every precaution to guarantee those provinces from invasion. Lacy and Laudohn have usually accompanied him in his progress through his dominions; during which, far from regarding inconvenience or fatigue, his enemies rather accuse him of needlessly exposing himself to both. In order to accustom himself to hardships and privations, he commonly sleeps upon a skin laid on the floor, and his table is not more delicate than his bed.

Still unsatisfied, while any part of his dominions remained to visit, he set out not
many

many years since, to inspect the vast portion of Poland seized on in 1772, extending from the frontiers of Austrian Silesia, along the Northern borders of Hungary, to those of Moldavia. The Emperor assured Sir Robert Keith, on his return from that expedition, in which he underwent every possible inconvenience, and suffered many hardships, that among others, he was almost devoured by bugs, and in spite of all his precautions, he became lousy to a great degree. As a proof of it, he said, that being one day employed in writing a letter to his mother the Empress, a louse fell from his hair on the paper. "I blew him off," continued he, and finished my "dispatch. Just as I was about to seal it, I "recollected a circumstance, which in my "hurry had escaped me. Having opened "the letter again, in order to insert it, to "my surprize, I found the louse had got "possession of his old post. I attempted to "dislodge him, but he maintained his "ground, and I therefore let him alone, "only adding, as a postscript, at the foot of "the paper—One of your Majesty's new
" Polish

“ Polish subjects absolutely insists on being
“ presented to you. I have endeavoured in
“ vain to prevent him, and I have, there-
“ fore, enclosed him in this letter.” The
anecdote, however trifling, may serve to shew
the turn of Joseph’s mind, which is not
destitute of humor.

In his expences and pleasures, public, as
well as personal, he is very economical ; a
quality which has generally, though not uni-
versally, distinguished superior Princes, and
which must greatly facilitate all his enter-
prizes or operations, whenever he ascends
the throne. Neither women, nor play, nor
dissipations of any kind drain his purse. I
asked a lady who knows him well, whether he
was supposed to have any natural children,
“ I can’t absolutely say,” answered she ;
“ but, this I can take upon me to assert,
“ that if he has any, they will never be a
“ charge to the State. Cinquante ducats
“ par ann feront tout leur Appenage.” In
the month of January last year, a “ Course
“ de traineaux” was exhibited in Vienna,
for the amusement of the Archduchess of
Milan,

Milan. A quantity of snow had been brought into the city, on the same morning, in carts, which was scattered over the streets through which the sledges must necessarily pass. The expence might amount to about six hundred florins, or somewhat more than sixty pounds. I was standing in a balcony, to view the spectacle, with two ladies of the Court. "You have no idea," said they, "of the vexation that it will cause the Emperor, to throw away six hundred florins in snow." His attention on pecuniary points, extends to the minutest detail, and is imputed to him as a fault : perhaps it may be such ; but it must be allowed that his subjects derive no little benefit from such parsimony.

I have heard the question much and frequently agitated here, among persons who are most competent to decide, whether Joseph is naturally generous, or penurious. Opinions are greatly divided on the point. He certainly is open to the impressions of compassion and benevolence, where he knows, or believes that the person recommended, is a proper

proper object of such sentiments. But his heart is not one of those, which, like Maria Theresa's, delights in giving ; and if it errs, only does so from an excess of liberality and kindness towards the unfortunate. The Emperor well knows that he is regarded as unlike her in this respect. "On m'accuse," said he not long ago, "de n'être pas généreux ; mais, si je donnois comme ma mère, nous n'aurions bientôt rien à donner." It cannot however be denied, that the liberality of the Empress acquires her universal affection and popularity ; while the strict economy of her son, though it may augment his resources, does not tend to conciliate the love of his subjects, or to give an elevated idea of his character and disposition to foreign nations.

The Emperor's personal courage is considered as indisputable ; yet, I think it stood higher in the public estimation before the late campaign, than it does at present. If however he is brave, it certainly is not the bravery of a hero : it is neither the sublime courage that distinguished the great Condé,
nor

nor is it the cool intrepidity and contempt of death, which Frederic has frequently displayed, when he has almost wantonly exposed himself in the heat of action. The different situation and motives of the two Princes, ought not, however, to be forgotten. So desperate was the condition of his Prussian Majesty at Lignitz, at Torgau, and on a variety of other occasions during the great war of seven years, that defeat and death were to him in effect almost the same thing. His troops required not merely example, but, demanded the animation of despair, to enable them to conquer. Joseph, acting on the defensive, secure in his entrenchments, his numbers, and his inattackable position ; might consult, like Louis the Fourteenth, his own safety, as well as his glory. It is certain, that during the last campaign he never shunned danger ; but neither did he court it. No one ever saw him expose his person, though he passed the night repeatedly in the outposts, where Marshal Haddick once surprized him, and took the liberty to reprehend

prehend him for such imprudence ; a freedom, which it is said, displeased the Emperor.

His talents for war are, however, much more problematical than his personal courage. That his presence and interference were injurious to the Austrian arms, during the late campaign, no longer can admit of any doubt. If, like his father and grandfather, he had been content to remain at Vienna, and to delegate to others the conduct of military affairs, Laudohn would not have let slip the moment of attacking Mellendorf, on his retreat into Saxony ; an opportunity which never can return, and for the loss of which, that illustrious General will not easily forgive his master. That the Emperor has wished for a rupture, that he beheld with pleasure all the preparations for it, and that he expected to acquire reputation in the field, is indisputable. But, experience may have undeceived him, and have convinced him how widely different are theory and practice. Previous to the present hostilities, he panted for

for an occasion to put himself at the head of his forces, and to measure himself with Frederic.

On his journey to France, two years ago, passing through Munich, he had there a long interview with the Duchess Dowager of Bavaria, sister of the present Electress Palatine : a Princess whom I have already mentioned as enjoying the confidence of his Prussian Majesty, and who maintains a regular correspondence with him. The conversation, which was animated on both sides, produced insensibly a discussion of the comparative merit of Sovereigns, warlike and pacific. The Duchess artfully led him on to speak his sentiments, by affecting to prefer the latter description of Princes to the former. Joseph's eyes flashed fire, and no longer able to conceal his wishes ; Madame," said he, "*J'aimerois mieux être capitaine dans mes propres grenadiers, que d'être Empereur, si je ne devois pas être Guerrier.*" Conscious that he had disclosed

In order to know him completely, it is requisite that he should survive Maria Theresa. Then, and not till then, we shall be able to appreciate in their utmost extent, the virtues, and the defects of Joseph the Second.

LETTER XXXIV.

Character, and anecdotes of Prince Kaunitz, first Minister of Maria Theresa.

VIENNA, March 13th, 1779.

THE picture that I have drawn of the Imperial Court, would still be incomplete and deficient, if not accompanied by some particulars of Prince Kaunitz; who, though not at the head of the Austrian finances, yet may justly be denominated first Minister. His talents, services, and an uninterrupted possession of power during near five-and-twenty years, leave him no competitor in the favor or esteem of Maria Theresa. His authority is too firmly consolidated, to be easily shaken, even by the event of her death; and it is probable, that he would occupy the same situation under Joseph, which he has so long filled in the Councils of the Empress. Born in February 1711, he has consequently completed his

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sixty-eighth

sixty-eighth year ; but, the advances of age seem neither to have impaired the freshness of his intellects, nor materially to have diminished his bodily activity and strength. At an early period of his life, he was initiated into public business, having acted in the capacity of civil Governor of Brussels, during the first years of the present reign. At the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, he was one of the Austrian Plenipotentiaries ; and after the conclusion of peace, he went Ambassador to the Court of Versailles.

Whether his residence in France conduced to impress him with favourable ideas of that country, or whether views of policy alone have influenced him, it is unquestionable, that his advice and opinion have operated a total and a radical change in the Austrian system of foreign alliance. There are not wanting persons here, and those perfectly well informed, who assure me that so great an alteration of measures originated in personal resentment. They assert, that at the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, he

he was over-reached by the English plenipotentiaries, who not only signed the peace without his participation; but, afterwards compelled him reluctantly to affix to it his signature. They add, that Kaunitz, whose gallantries have always formed a very prominent part of his character, was occupied in paying his court to a lady of whom he was deeply enamoured, while the Embassadors of Great Britain terminated the business. His resentment at being so duped and over-reached, prompted him to seize a favourable occasion of precipitating his mistress and the House of Austria into the arms of their antient rival. If this story, and the inferences formed on it, are not true in their utmost extent, I believe on the other hand, that they are by no means destitute of foundation.

In 1754, at forty-three years of age, Prince Kaunitz having supplanted his predecessor in the cabinet, Count Uhlfeldt, was constituted Minister for Foreign Affairs. The great war, commonly called in Germany, "the War

“of Seven years,” broke out soon afterwards. For a century and a half, the House of Bourbon had been the inveterate hereditary enemy of every Emperor, from Ferdinand the Second, down to Charles the Sixth: while England, from the accession of William the Third, almost invariably sustained the Austrian family and interests. To the active interposition and assistance of the Cabinet of London, aided by the enthusiasm of the people, Maria Theresa herself, when attacked by France and Bavaria, at the beginning of her reign, was not a little indebted for her preservation. Prince Kaunitz nevertheless undertook, in defiance of every impediment, closely to unite the Courts of Vienna and Versailles: he succeeded in the attempt, however improbable, and concluded in 1756, the celebrated treaty, which still continues to connect them. It is not unworthy of remark, that in the lapse of two centuries, no matrimonial alliance had ever taken place between the Imperial Branch of the Austrian Family, and that of Bourbon; Elizabeth, daughter of the Emperor

Maximilian the Second, who was the last instance, having been married to Charles the Ninth of France, as long ago as 1570. The Archduchess Maria Antonietta, by her union with Louis the Sixteenth, only eight years since, in 1770, formed the principal cement of this new system, which seems likely to remain unshaken, at least during the life of the present Minister. At the moment that I am writing, the Baron de Breteuil, the French Ambassador, who acts openly as mediator on the part of Austria, is about to appear in that character, at the approaching conferences for peace. We may nevertheless reasonably doubt, whether the affected interposition of France in favor of her antient rival, is not more ostensible than real; and whether the Cabinet of Versailles, far from wishing to extricate, does not secretly enjoy the embarrassments of its Imperial Ally. How can France, in fact, sincerely desire the aggrandizement of the House of Austria? How can Louis the Sixteenth contribute to extend the territories of Maria Theresa and Joseph? Prince Kaunitz himself, though the original author of the
present

present system of alliance; yet, appears to feel how inefficacious it must ever prove, in uniting or blending the interests of the two states. On a variety of occasions, he has even appeared to manifest far more considerations for the English nation, than for the French.

It is difficult to conceive any ascendant more confirmed, or any influence more imperious, than Prince Kaunitz's over the Empress: a circumstance, the singularity of which is increased, when we reflect that she is neither a weak, nor an indolent woman. In order to attain to such a height of power, we are naturally led to suppose, that besides his superior abilities for Government, he has not been negligent of the arts which conciliate royal favor. That he does not maintain himself in his present elevation, by any such compliances or attentions, is however certain. Never did any Minister appear to sacrifice so little either to the prejudices, or even to the wishes and requests of his Sovereign. He treats with equal indifference, the testimonies of her partiality, or of her resentment. Far from desiring to see
her

her frequently, it is an act of compliance on his part when he visits her. His palace in Vienna is contiguous to that of the Empress, and not a hundred paces from her very chamber. He is not ignorant of the pleasure which she would receive, from seeing and conversing with him on matters of public business; yet, in defiance, or in neglect of her repeated messages, he rarely visits her, except on particular occasions, more than once in twelve days or a fortnight. Every thing is transacted between them by correspondence.

As if the refusal to gratify her reasonable demands, were not a sufficient proof of his ascendancy over her, he shocks her very prejudices. Nay, in more than one instance, Maria Theresa has descended to acts of complaisance, and almost of personal humiliation, in favor of her Minister, which I hardly can venture to mention, from their incredibility. † Prince Kaunitz, till within the last few years, was not only attached to women, and gave himself no trouble to conceal

conceal his irregularities; but he seemed as if he wished to render them public and notorious. Actresses, dancers, and opera girls of distinguished beauty or accomplishments, lived under his immediate protection. The Gabrieli, who has been so celebrated from Palermo to Petersburg; the Foliuzzi, and various other Italians, known either by the charms of their voice or their person, have successively shared the Austrian Minister's affection. It is a fact, that when he has gone to wait on the Empress, he has carried his mistress in the carriage with him to the gate of the palace; and that she has remained in the coach, while he went to transact business with her Majesty, from whose presence he immediately returned to her.

That a dissolute, or a libertine Princess, such as Catherine the Second, or her predecessor Elizabeth, Empress of Russia, should from considerations of policy, overlook and pardon such trespasses against decorum, would excite no surprize. But, that a Sovereign, who, rigidly virtuous in her own conduct, severely

severely represses all infractions of morality in others; should nevertheless permit her first Minister with impunity to commit such irregularities, appears a sort of paradox. It is certain that the greatest subject in rank throughout the Austrian dominions, who, encouraged by the precedent, were to attempt the same thing, would soon repent his temerity. Even Prince Kaunitz himself, I am assured, has been many times on the point of receiving his dismissal from all his offices; more, however, from the unaccountable obstinacy with which he has refused to obey the Empress's commands, than from her resentment at his conduct in other respects. In vain would any future Minister attempt a similar experiment: his disgrace and ruin would be the infallible consequence. Not only the present Minister's talents and services plead for him: long prescription and habit have made his very weaknesses respectable in Maria Theresa's eyes. They have grown old together, have shared the same dangers, weathered the same storms, and are
now

now too intimately acquainted with each other's failings, as well as virtues, to separate in the evening of life. These causes sufficiently account for his present power, and probably secure his future authority against all attack under her reign. No man here looks forward to a change of administration, except by the death of the actual possessor. In case of such an event, either Prince Staremberg, who now governs the Low Countries, or Count Cobenzel, lately returned from Berlin, where he was Envoy, are regarded as likely to succeed. The latter of those Ministers is about to assume an important part in the approaching negotiations for peace between Austria and Prussia.

Against the event to which I have alluded, as the only one capable of causing an alteration in the councils of the Empress, Prince Kaunitz takes every possible precaution. No man ever dreaded dissolution more, and age does not seem to have in any measure reconciled him to its approach. All his exertions systematically tend to pro-
long

long his life, and his powers of enjoyment, or of gratification. He neglects no means of protracting the term of his existence, which ingenuity can devise, or wisdom can suggest. At table, though he eats very plentifully, he no longer commits any excess; and in order to maintain his health, while he procures an appetite, he never fails to ride in the Manege for a considerable time, every day. A variety of horses brought from all parts of Europe, which he mounts by turns, and manages with no little force as well as address, considering his age; equally contribute to amuse, and to invigorate him. He has long since renounced every other pleasure incompatible with his great object, the preservation of life. These attentions would still be laudable, or at least excusable, if he had not the weakness to fear and to deprecate death, more than a wise man, who knows the uncertain tenure of mortality, can be justified in doing. His apprehensions are so puerile, and so well known, that no person even mentions death in his presence;

presence; a circumstance of which strangers are soon apprized, after their arrival at Vienna. Above all, he dreads the small-pox; a disease which he has never had, and against which he is continually on his guard. Unless some unexpected accident should shorten his career, he certainly bids fair to attain the age of Cardinal Fleury, and like him, to govern with almost unlimited authority, long after the period when men are usually incapacitated, or indisposed by infirmities, for active exertion.

Never, perhaps, did a First Minister request so few, and receive so many favors from his sovereign, as Prince Kaunitz. I know from indisputable authority, that the Empress confers, absolutely unasked and unsolicited, almost every gratification or emolument, which is possessed by himself and the other branches of his family. The eldest of his four sons, Count Ernest, is employed in a civil capacity at home; and has been honored with the order of the Golden Fleece. Two of the others, Dominick

minick and Joseph, the foreign Ministers, one at Madrid, the other at Peterburgh. But, the Prince their father is not supposed to be rich; an indontestable proof that his administration has been more directed to public objects, than to the accumulation of private wealth. Those persons who most severely criticize, or reprobate his system of policy; and many such are to be found here; yet admit his superiority to every sordid or mercenary consideration. So inattentive is he even to the interests of his own children, that they have themselves frequently reproached him with indifference, or with want of exertion, on that head. It is difficult to ascertain whether this inattention arises most from genuine disinterestedness, from carelessness of temper, or from a high spirit of independence; perhaps from a combination of all those qualities. His appointments, as Chancellor of State, and Minister for foreign Affairs, though considered as ample here, are far inferior to the salary enjoyed by a First Lord

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of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer with us, when those offices are united in the same person. Including the allowance for his table, they do not exceed forty thousand florins, or about four thousand pounds sterling a year. The difference in the value of money, and in the price of the essential articles of ordinary consumption, must, it is true, be allowed greatly in favor of Vienna, when compared with London. But, Prince Kaunitz sits down regularly to a table of sixteen or eighteen covers, every day; while an English Minister is not compelled to any similar expence.

In his person, Prince Kaunitz is tall, thin, and well-made, though destitute of elegance or grace. If his face has not been handsome, it is nevertheless a countenance, in which are stamped the strong characters of sense and intelligence. His manners are stiff; yet, there is in them something characteristic and peculiar, which, while it forcibly attracts attention, by no means disgusts or displeases. He usually dresses with simplicity;

plicity; but on particular occasions I have seen him magnificently habited. The "Toison d'or," ornamented with brilliants, he never fails to wear on his breast. He has likewise received the order of "St. Stephen," instituted by Maria Theresa in 1764; and he enjoys the peculiar privilege of wearing the star in diamonds, which the sumptuary laws here forbid to every other subject. The letter, or rather note, written to him by the Empress, when she conferred on him this mark of distinction, is couched in a style so different from the ordinary one of Princes, and bespeaks so much sensibility, that I cannot resist inserting it here. It was addressed to Prince Kaunitz near thirteen years ago, on the marriage of the Archduchess Christina to Prince Albert of Saxony, in April 1766. The lady who gave it me, copied it from the original; and I prefer it to any of the brilliant and studied letters of Frederic, which are circulated and read with such admiration, all over Germany.

"Ce n'est pas seulement par dispense de
"Grand Maître; mais par distinction, que

“ vous pouvez porter la Croix de l’Ordre de
 “ St. Etienne, en diamans. Vous avez tant
 “ contribué à l’illustrer, que je saisis avec
 “ avidité cette occasion si chère à mon cœur,
 “ de vous temoigner ma reconnoissance, qui
 “ vous est due depuis long tems, et qui ne
 “ finira qu’avec ma vie.

“ MARIE THERÈSE.”

After the careless or independent manner
 in which Prince Kaunitz behaves towards the
 Empress Queen, it cannot excite surprize,
 that he treats his equals and inferiors, with
 still greater marks of contemptuous uncon-
 cern. Towards the nobility at large of both
 sexes, as well as towards the Ministers of fo-
 reign Courts, he hardly observes any mea-
 sures of decorum. Far from accosting them
 with civility when they enter his drawing-
 room, or as they surround his billiard table,
 which is placed at one corner of it; he fre-
 quently turns his back on them at the mo-
 ment when they are about to pay him their
 court, or when they are desirous of entering
 into conversation with him. If the French

Embassador is exempted from so humiliating a treatment, he owes it purely to the necessity that Prince Kaunitz feels, of managing in some measure the representative of a powerful Court, which has connected itself by ties of marriage and of policy with Austria. But, the presence of Monsieur de Brieteuil certainly imposes on him no restraint whatsoever. In company with the first persons of rank of both sexes, at his own table, he does not hesitate, every day, after dinner, to pass at least a quarter of an hour, in the disgusting occupation of cleaning his teeth, which he performs with all the minute ceremonies of the toilet. Perhaps, such an insult to decency and to good breeding, never was committed in any civilized country. Certainly it is not known elsewhere ; and it would have excited astonishment mixed with aversion, if it had been practised by Charles the Twelfth himself ; who, though he was accustomed to spread his butter with his thumbs, yet never violated wantonly the rules of civility towards ladies. I have

been present frequently at the scene to which I allude, in company with the most distinguished men and women in Vienna, Austrians, as well as foreigners. It is difficult to push contempt for all the forms of polished society to a greater length.

The Austrian first Minister rises very late, usually at, or nearly about noon; but he transacts public business in bed during the whole morning, where his secretaries attend for that purpose. At one o'clock he takes chocolate. His hour of dinner is uncertain, varying capriciously from four o'clock, to five, six, and seven in the evening; in consequence of which want of punctuality, all who are able, have running footmen stationed in the Prince's antichamber, to bring them intimation when he is about to appear. If he accepts an invitation to dine with any person, however high his rank, it is only on condition that the wine, bread, and even the water be sent from his own house. The principal dishes must likewise be dressed by his cook: stipulations, which, however humiliating, are never refused

fused by those who aspire to the honour of entertaining him. No crowned head in Europe, I believe, exacts similar marks of deference from his Courtiers ; nor could Louis the Fourteenth have experienced greater proofs of servile respect, when he condescended to visit his favourite Ministers or subjects. Naturally cheerful, and disposed to the pleasures of society, Prince Kaunitz nevertheless unbends at table. He converses well on almost all topics, reasons with accuracy, and has a vast command of expression. Italian, French, and German, he speaks with no less ease than fluency ; but, French is the language which he usually talks in company, as being most generally understood. It is indeed rare to hear him utter a word in German ; for which language, like his Prussian Majesty, he does not seem to entertain any predilection. To Italians, of whom there are always many in the Court of Vienna, he never fails to address himself in Italian, if they do not possess French in perfection.

His favorite topics of debate or of conversation, are horses, mechanics, and carriages. It is scarcely possible to be a greater Connoisseur than he is, or affects to be, on these subjects ; and whenever any of them are mentioned, he harangues with no less perspicuity than information. On politics, as may be supposed, he rarely or never touches ; but on historical points he is easily led out, and displays, without affectation, a very extensive acquaintance with all the great events of modern Europe. If not a man of shining talents, he is unquestionably possessed of great enlargement of mind, much application, and sound judgment, matured by the most perfect acquaintance with all the financial and military resources of the House of Austria. Endowed with uncommon penetration, he seizes with facility the difficulties of any affair ; and never was a head better organized, nor more capable of uniting precision with dispatch, in the transaction of public business.

The wisdom of his policy in forming an alliance with France, though the feature in
his

his administration, of which, above all others, he is peculiarly vain, may yet be accounted very problematical; and time alone can affix to it the indelible stamp of excellence, or of error. If opinions are however divided respecting that measure, they are not so relative to the partition of Poland, in consenting to which he committed an irreparable fault, never to be sufficiently condemned. Quitting the path of justice and of honor, no less than the true interests of his Sovereign, he stopped to divide with two other rival Powers, the plunder of a defenceless nation, whom he ought systematically to have protected and supported against every invader. Caught in the toils spread for him by Frederic, and either a dupe to his own vanity, or desirous by whatever means to augment the Austrian dominions; he doubtless already feels, though he may not avow, the pernicious consequences of so short sighted a policy. It is evident that Prussia alone was a real gainer by that dark transaction, where the superior genius of Frederic achieved more in the
Cabinet,

Cabinet, than he had previously done in the Field ; in which Austria was completely duped or over-reached ; and to which Russia was only a reluctant, as well as an involuntary party. It constitutes the greatest blot in Kaunitz's political character, and will probably be still more reprobated by posterity, than by the present age.

His pleasures, at a period of life so advanced, can neither be very numerous, nor extremely varied. He is fond of Music, and likes theatrical entertainments, though he seldom attends them. I have seen him delighted with the "Ombres Chinoises," when exhibited in a private room, before a select company. At cards he never plays ; but, during the greater part of every evening, he amuses himself at billiards, in his own drawing-room. One of his passions through life, has been architecture, practical as well as theoretical ; and it is pretended, that he has not a little impaired his fortune by indulging this elegant propensity. Certainly he has thrown away immense sums ; I am told,

told, near a million of florins, or full a hundred thousand pounds, between his house in the suburbs of Vienna, and his seat at Austerlitz in Moravia. Neither of them are yet completed, and he is perpetually pulling down, altering, and repairing. If there is not great exaggeration in these assertions, they will explain the reason, why, after such a long possession of power, he has amassed little wealth for his family. Indeed, it would be difficult otherwise to account for it, since he is not generous; at least not from disposition, though he knows how to affect liberality on proper occasions.

Prince Kaunitz is a good Catholic, but has not any tincture of bigotry or superstition. I believe he rarely, if ever confesses: I know that he never attends, nor hears mass performed, except on Sundays; and then only for ten minutes, not publicly, but in his own house. Superior to the temptation or the love of gold, he is not less exempt from any spirit of vengeance. The natural elevation of his mind raises him above Court-cabal, and

and little ministerial intrigue. An enemy to every species of constraint, the freedom which he exercises himself, he extends to those about him: yet, the consciousness of his dignity never forsakes him for a moment. I have seen him, in his own drawing-room, as unconcerned, and as attentive to every point of his game at billiards, while the Emperor stood on one side of him, and the Archduke Maximilian on the other, as though they had both been private individuals of no consequence. He is an Actor, and he never appeared to me to play his part so well, as on those occasions. Towards men of genius, artists, and persons distinguished in every line of letters or of science, he is affable and polite to a high degree. Gluck not only dines frequently at his table; but, I have known the Prince address his discourse to him during the whole repast, in a manner the most flattering, while he has not condescended to notice the first nobility of Vienna seated near him. In this part of his character, he stands widely

widely opposed to the Austrian men of rank, who retain many of the feudal prejudices of their ancestors, and rarely open their houses to men of merit or talents, on the footing of acquaintance, unconnected with the advantages of birth.

If flexibility is not to be reckoned among the qualities of Prince Kaunitz, as little likewise is dissimulation. It forms an instance, rare in the history of the world, and more peculiarly of Courts, that a man of such a cast, though his abilities may be ever so eminent, should have attained to power, and have preserved it for so many years! Far from concealing his sentiments, even on points the most delicate, as well as personal, he has always expressed himself with boldness. Nothing is better known than his dislike, I might almost say his aversion, for the present Emperor, when he was successively Archduke and King of the Romans, before his father's death. The Prince never mentioned his character, conduct, or understanding, except with marks of disapprobation.

probation: Even after Joseph's accession to the Imperial dignity, he did not alter his language. "The Emperor," said he more than once, "*fears me, and I dislike him.*" As a protector of the fine arts, and particularly of Music, Kaunitz was deeply hurt at the "Ordonnance" which produced the ruin of the Italian opera. The spirit of innovation and reform, characteristic of all Joseph's regulations, by no means suited the taste of the Minister. "*Je ne vois,*" said he, "*que des defences de tous cotés.*" At that time, his Imperial Majesty never visited nor conversed with him: on the contrary, it was no secret that he held Prince Kaunitz in detestation.

Insensibly, however, their mutual alienation has not only ceased, but has been succeeded by apparent attachment, esteem, and confidence. Those sentiments can scarcely be carried to a higher pitch of reciprocal deference and respect, than at the present moment. How far, views of policy or interest on either side, have conducted to operate

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rate so total a change, it is impossible to ascertain. Joseph, who is unquestionably a master of dissimulation, may only wait for the proper moment in which to manifest his real sentiments; but people here are universally convinced, that no reconciliation was ever more complete or more sincere. He seems to be never satisfied with giving the Prince the most flattering testimonies of consideration and personal regard. During the course of the two last winters, not content with frequently presenting himself at the drawing-room of the first Minister, as one of the company; Joseph has often visited him in his bed-chamber, in order to converse with him at more ease, on every subject of public import. These interviews have been conducted without ceremony or attendants, and not unusually without any previous intimation on the part of the Emperor.

Whenever he has occasion to mention the Prince's name, it is accompanied with expressions of consideration for his services and virtues. On the anniversary of his own birth,
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it is customary for Prince Kaunitz always to dine with his eldest son, Count Ernest, and a select party. Upon the second of February, last year, which was the day to which I allude, the first Minister repaired to his son's house, about half past four o'clock. Candles had not been brought in, though it was already dusk; and the company expecting every minute to be summoned to table, were conversing in the drawing-room, when the door opened very gently. A person entered, and on his advancing towards the Countess Ernest Kaunitz, they perceived with surprize that it was the Emperor. "I am come, Madam," said he, "unasked, to eat a part of your dinner. I hope you will permit me on this day to shew my respect, and to pay my compliments to Prince Kaunitz." He accordingly sat down with the other guests; but, at table he placed himself on the Minister's right hand, and did not allow of the smallest distinction being paid him, considering himself only as one of the company. It was difficult for a Sovereign to shew a more delicate or flattering

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ing mark of attention. I received these particulars from one of the ladies who was present on the occasion.

If Joseph manifests so decided an affection for the Prince, the latter, who now repays it with interest, seems to have no more grateful or pleasing topic of conversation, than the praises of his master. His filial piety and duty ; his unwearied exertions for the grandeur of the Austrian House, and the felicity of his subjects ; his application to business ; his readiness to expose his person in the field, when his country demands it ; each of these, and many other of the Emperor's qualities, are the frequent subject of the Minister's eulogium. On the eleventh of April, last year, the day when his Majesty set off from Vienna to join the army in Bohemia, Kaunitz launched out at his own table, on the great endowments which meet in Joseph the Second. " *L'Empereur,*" said he several times, " *est un vrai heros.*" It may, nevertheless, be doubted whether, though he admired the hero, he

approved the heroism, since the war has never been considered as either agreeable to his wishes, or consonant to his views and policy. Happily for both the Prince and the Minister, it seems now to be drawing to a conclusion, according to every appearance: a subject on which I shall have more to say in my next letter,

LETTER XXXV.

Appointment of the Congress at Teschen, for the conclusion of peace.—Sentiments excited by it at Vienna.—Departure of the Grand Duke of Tuscany for Florence.—Character of that Prince, and of the Grand Duchess of Tuscany, his wife.—Reflections on the war occasioned by the Bavarian succession.

VIENNA, March 17th, 1779.

AT length, after a painful period of suspense and anxiety, I believe I may announce the approach, if not the certainty of peace. As long ago as the 27th of last month, a courier from Breslaw arrived here, with intelligence of all the preliminaries being already adjusted, and only waiting for signature. A congress, designed to settle the terms of the definitive treaty, was at first fixed to meet at Troppau in Austrian Silesia; but the little town of Teschen, capital of the duchy of the same name, near the

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frontiers of the Imperial Poland, is since substituted in place of Troppau. As belonging to Prince Albert and the Archduchess Christina, Teschen, which is a sort of neutral spot, may be thought proper for the meeting of plenipotentiaries. Otherwise, a more wretched and desolate collection of huts, could hardly have been found in any corner of Europe. An armistice, preparatory to negotiation, took place on the 8th of the present month. The Baron de Breteuil, and Count de Cobenzel, late Envoy Extraordinary at the Court of Berlin, were immediately named to repair to Teschen, on the part of France and Austria. Prince Repnin, and the Baron de Riedazel, Minister to the Court of Vienna from his Prussian Majesty previous to the war, are likewise appointed on the side of Frederic, and of his ally, Catharine. But, Count Cobenzel having been unexpectedly seized with a fit of the gout, which incapacitated him for travelling; his relation, John Philip Cobenzel, has been substituted in his place.

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The French Ambassador and he set off for the place of negotiation, on the eighth, the day when the armistice commenced. The Court of St. James's, which, on former occasions, might have been called in as mediator, if not as umpire, in the quarrel, is completely excluded, and seems to be as little considered on either side, as the meanest Italian Republic. Neither the vigor of our counsels, nor the success of our arms at the present moment, tend to impress Germany and Europe with respect.

Notwithstanding the apparent certainty of the approach of peace, great discontent prevails in this Capital. Not only the inglorious manner in which the war has been conducted; the circumstances likewise, under which a Congress is about to be opened, excite a degree of ferment approaching to indignation; since it is well known that the Prussians still continue in Bohemia. But, neither the Court nor the cabinet, neither Joseph nor the Prime Minister, seem inclined to prosecute hostilities. Relative to

the terms upon which peace will ultimately be made, we can only conjecture: no one here, however, doubts that it must be purchased by a partial, if not by a total restitution, of the territories which occasioned the rupture. Frederic, strong in the cause that he espouses, sustained by the open aid of Saxony, and by the avowed support of Russia, possesses great advantages over his adversary. France is neither supposed to interfere with zeal, in favor of Maria Theresa and her son; nor, embarrassed as Louis the Sixteenth now is by a war with England, can he, were he even so disposed, extend effectual assistance to the Empress Queen. Catharine, on the contrary, irritated against the Austrian Minister, who, in the partition of Poland, and on other occasions, has shewn as little respect for her interests, as deference for her wishes, acts vigorously in favour of Prussia. The Princes of the German Empire look on, and enjoy with a malignant pleasure, the embarrassments, as well as the humiliation, of

of the Imperial Cabinet. Under these circumstances, it is probable that the Court of Vienna will not refuse, and has already resolved, to make the sacrifices, however ample or painful, necessary for ensuring peace.

Another event, which confirms the supposition, is the return of the Great Duke and Duchess of Tuscany, to Florence. They doubtless delayed their departure, till the decision of so great a point, in which Leopold must necessarily feel himself deeply, though not immediately involved. He is in fact the presumptive, eventual heir, to all the dominions of Maria Theresa, as long as his elder brother is neither married, nor has any issue. On the same day when the armistice took place, and on which the Austrian and French Embassadors set off for Teschen, the Great Duke and Duchess left Vienna, for Florence. After an affectionate and tender adieu on the part of the Empress, they proceeded to Baden, only four leagues distant, to which place Joseph and all the other members of the Imperial Family ac-

accompanied them. There they dined together, and the two brothers parted, with mutual testimonies of affection and regret. Maria Theresâ's infirmities did not allow her to be of the party.

Relative to the Great Duke, I have said little in these Memoirs ; as, though he has been here several months, I have had comparatively few opportunities of seeing him ; neither he nor the Great Dukes mixing in society. He is six years younger than the Emperor, of a middle size, well made, and apparently of a more robust constitution than Joseph. Never did two brothers less resemble each other in person and in manners. Leopold has not either the intelligence of countenance, the restless activity of mind, or the communicative and affable disposition of the Emperor. His features, grave and saturnine, are deficient in dignity, as well as in animation. In their baldness upon the crown of the head, and in that respect only, the brothers are alike. Perhaps, a long residence in Italy, may have

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contributed to render the Great Duke more reserved than if he had remained in Germany, where the national character is frank and open. It is indisputable, that he likes Florence better than Vienna; a preference, it must be owned, equally natural and pardonable. Independently of the position and climate, which are in favor of the Tuscan Capital, he is there a Sovereign; here he is only an elevated individual. Though less ingratiating and accessible than his elder brother, he is beloved and esteemed by those who enjoy his confidence, and who know how to appreciate his merits. His mind is far more cultivated likewise, by an extensive acquaintance with polite letters, and even with some branches of science. Under a serious exterior, he conceals from common eyes the defects, which Joseph's more unguarded manners expose; but, his gallantries have been not less general or notorious, than those of any of his predecessors of the celebrated House of Medicis. In the administration of Tuscany, peculiarly
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in the amelioration of its laws and police, he is said to have displayed application, steadiness, and judgment; qualities, which it is probable he may, at some future time, have occasion to exercise on a greater and more conspicuous theatre. Joseph, whose intentions not to marry a third time, are well known, regards him as his successor; and the two brothers either feel, or affect to feel, a very warm attachment for each other.

Of the Grand Duchess of Tuscany, in common with almost every person here, I know still less from personal observation, as she is hardly ever seen in public; her delicate state of health incapacitating her for much exertion or amusement. Daughter of the present King of Spain, Charles the Third, she resembles him in the lineaments of countenance; and no Princess can have slenderer pretensions to personal beauty, grace, or elegance. Her figure is meagre, her face thin and pale, her complexion fallow, her nose long, as well as large, and her sight contracted. Nor are her manners and de-
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meanor better calculated to represent the Majesty of the Imperial Throne, which it is possible she may one day ascend ; an event that she is said not to contemplate with much complacency, or to anticipate with any impatience. Like her husband, she is considered here as more partial to the Tuscans, than to the Germans. If she is deficient in personal charms, she is not less so in female accomplishments. A Neapolitan education, completed in Spain, was probably not very favourable to the disclosure or cultivation of her natural endowments. But, every deficiency of an external and ornamental nature, is amply compensated by the intrinsic worth and solid excellence of her character. Devoted to her children and her husband, beyond whom she knows no object of affection or enjoyment, in them centre all her cares. Domestic and retired, she shuns public exhibitions, in which neither her health, her turn of mind, nor her manners, enable her to appear with advantage. A numerous family, consist-

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ing of nine Princes and Princesses, by whom the House of Austria must in all probability be perpetuated, occupy her time, and engross her whole attention. Little known beyond the limits of Florence or of Vienna, she is well recompensed for the want of admiration and celebrity, by the respect and attachment of the few, who are acquainted with her virtues.

I am now about to leave this Capital, after having witnessed the origin, the progress, and probably the termination, of the Bavarian quarrel. A rupture of such importance, has awakened the Imperial Court from the long repose of fifteen years, which succeeded the great war terminated in 1763. Joseph the Second, and Prince Kaunitz, have found more serious occupations for their time, than travelling or building. Frederic, in opposing the ambition of the former, has disclosed the secret and discordant springs, which actuate the movements of the Austrian Cabinet; and has brought forward to the public eye, the
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three principal personages who compose it, more than could have been done by a much longer period of tranquillity. Whatever portion of the Bavarian succession may be retained by Austria, at the definitive treaty of peace; the essential advantages, as well as the glory, of having taken up arms in defence of the Palatine House, and of the Germanic System, remain with his Prussian Majesty. If he has not acquired the same laurels as in former wars, he has at least checked the career of Joseph the Second, at its outset; and he has proved to Europe at large, that time, though it may have tempered the ardor of his counsels, or the rapidity of his movements, has not diminished his vigilance, nor impaired his exertions. France, however she may be connected by ties of marriage, or of pretended policy, with Maria Theresa, has rather affected to give, than has really extended, any aid to her on the present occasion: while Catherine the Second, neither mollified by the advances, nor conciliated by

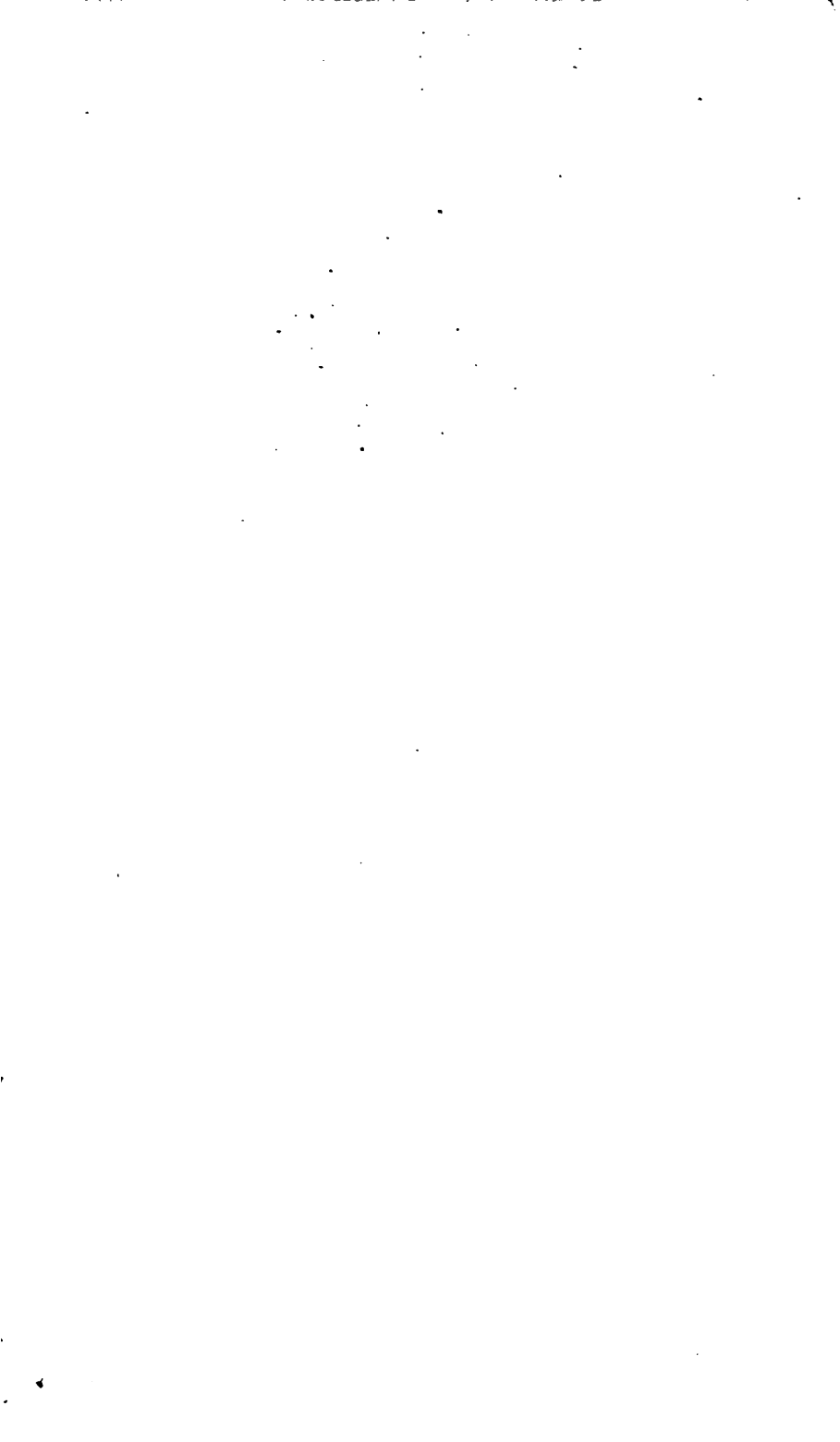
by the blandishments of the Austrian Cabinet, has interposed as arbiters in the dispute, and has compelled the Empress Queen, or rather her Son, to sheathe the sword. Such is, or is about to be, the termination of Joseph the Second's rash attempt to appropriate a part of Bavaria. It has embittered the evening of his mother's reign, without augmenting her glory, or raising his own reputation; though it may possibly add somewhat to the extent of the Austrian dominions. As I am on the point of setting out for Venice, I shall not however witness the final treaty, which, while it determines that point, will restore tranquillity to this part of Europe.

I remain, &c. &c.

THE END.

Luke Hanford, printer, near Lincoln's-Inn Fields.

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